

Ravenglass - Wasdale - Eskdale drive

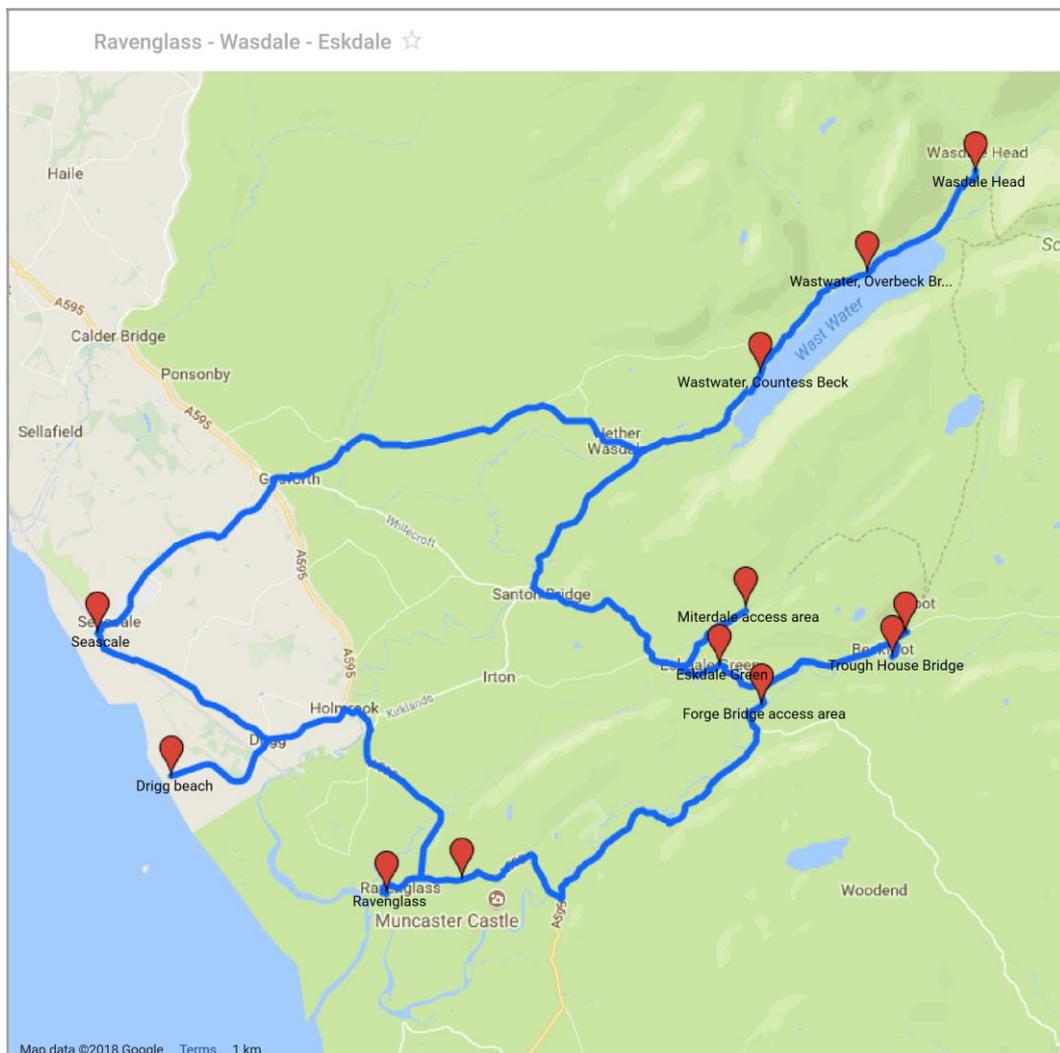


A drive around the remote western Lake District which includes the only coastal village in the National Park and some good beaches before heading inland to explore the dramatic and beautiful valleys of Wasdale and Eskdale.



Wastwater

Route Map



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

Distance	Attraction	Car Park Coordinates
0 miles	Ravenglass village	N 54.35529, W 3.40949
5.2 miles	Drigg beach	N 54.37305, W 3.46548
8.9 miles	Seascale village	N 54.39497, W 3.48473
17.7 miles	Wastwater, Countess Beck	N 54.43443, W 3.31227
19.4 miles	Wastwater, Overbeck Bridge	N 54.44993, W 3.28455
21.1 miles	Wasdale Head	N 54.46511, W 3.25634
31.1 miles	Miterdale access area	N 54.39877, W 3.31619
32.6 miles	Eskdale Green	N 54.39000, W 3.32312
35.0 miles	Trough House Bridge	N 54.39141, W 3.27796
35.4 miles	Dalegarth station	N 54.39505, W 3.27460
37.3 miles	Forge Bridge access area	N 54.38395, W 3.31215
45.0 miles	Muncaster Castle	N 54.35740, W 3.38987
46.1 miles	Ravenglass village	N 54.35529, W 3.40949

The Drive

Distance: 0 miles

Location: Ravenglass village car park

Coordinates: N 54.35529, W 3.40949

Ravenglass is an attractive village overlooking the estuary of the Esk, Irt and Mite rivers. It is the only coastal village within the Lake District National Park. You can stroll through the village on the normally quiet road and along the foreshore, admiring the scenic views across the estuary. The main attraction in the village is the terminus station for the miniature [Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway](#), where tiny steam trains will take you on a wonderful 7 mile journey through the Esk valley to Dalegarth station. Ravenglass station also has a cafe and small [museum](#) telling the interesting history of the line. Next door is the full size train station on the Cumbrian coast line where you can catch national network trains.

Ravenglass was also the site of an important Roman Fort and naval base from about AD130. A short [walk](#) to the south of the village are the remains of the old fort [bath house](#), one of the tallest surviving Roman buildings in the country. The village also has a selection of pubs and cafes for refreshments and some public toilets near the main car park which is in the centre of the village and is pay and display.



Ravenglass front

Travelling:

Stay on the road out of the car park which is the only road out of the village. Soon meet the estuary and bear right, under the main railway line, past the Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway car park, under its railway line and climb a short distance to a T junction with the main A595. Turn left and the road descends with

views over the River Mite valley. Soon, there is a bridge over the Ravenglass & Eskdale railway where you can see the small and attractive Muncaster Mill station on the right. There is some free parking on the track to the station if you want to stop. Continue on the A595, over the River Mite and on for approx 1.6 miles to a bridge over the River Irt where you enter the village of Holmrook, overlooking the river. Very shortly, take a left turn on the B5344 towards Drigg. Continue for approx 1 mile, through Drigg village, to take a left turn towards 'Station and shore'. Shortly, pass Drigg railway station on the right where there is a small tea room with craft shop and the [Victoria Hotel](#) also provides refreshments. Continue over the level crossing and past the low-level radioactive waste site on the right which is thankfully well hidden. Head towards the sand dunes in the distance and soon meet the end of the road where there is a parking area.



Drigg beach

Distance: 5.2 miles

Location: Drigg beach

Coordinates: N 54.37305, W 3.46548

Drigg beach is a vast open area of sand and shingle with sand dunes behind. The car park allows easy access to the beach which stretches for miles in each direction. There is always plenty of room to sit and relax or play and you can walk in either direction along the coast. At high tide there is a strip of good sand and shingle, at low tide there is a huge expanse of hard sand exposed. There are some wonderful views in all directions, out to sea towards the Isle of Man,

north towards St Bees Head (ignoring Sellafield nuclear site a few miles away), south towards Black Combe mountain and inland towards the Wasdale mountains. Climbing up one of the many sand dunes provides even better views. Free car park but no facilities on site.

Travelling:

Retrace your steps, admiring the distant views of Wasdale and Eskdale, over the level crossing to the T junction with the B5344 and turn left towards Seascale. Continue past fields and isolated properties for approx 1.7 miles to a bridge over railway line and enter the village of Seascale. The road soon meets the coastline with excellent views out to sea. Descend to a sharp right bend in the road and the village car park is straight ahead.

Distance: 8.9 miles

Location: Seascale village car park

Coordinates: N 54.39497, W 3.48473

Seascale is a pleasant coastal village which provides good shore access and some wonderful sea views towards the Isle of Man. Adjacent to the large car park, overlooking the sea, there is a large open grassy area with numerous picnic tables and a childrens play area. At high tide there is a narrow strip of shingle beach but when the tide is out a vast expanse of hard sand appears which provides an enjoyable stroll. The village has a long history and became popular when the Cumbrian coast railway line was built in the mid 19th century, allowing tourists easier access. Sellafield nuclear site is nearby and employs many locals but fortunately it remains quite well hidden from the village and sea front. There is a convenience store and public toilets adjacent to the free car park.



Seascale

Travelling:

Leaving the car park, turn left on the B5344 and pass under the narrow railway bridge. Immediately on the right is an attractive old Victorian water tower. Continue through the village, passing a small supermarket on the right and soon enter open country with good views ahead towards the Lakeland fells. Approx 1.7 miles beyond the village, approach a cross-roads with the main A595. Head straight across the junction to enter the village of Gosforth. Shortly, take the second exit at a mini-roundabout and just beyond is the free village car park on the left. Nearby are toilet facilities, the village shop, a couple of pubs and the ever-popular Gosforth bakery. Continue through the village and soon pass [St Mary's Church](#) on the left which has an interesting collection of Viking carved stones, including the tall stone cross in the graveyard.



Nether Wasdale

A short distance beyond the church, the road bears right over the River Bleng and climbs away from the village, before descending into Wasdale valley with glorious views inbetween trees. Approx 2.2 miles beyond the village, take a right turn signposted to Nether Wasdale. The narrow road continues approx 0.9 miles to descend through the small attractive village of Nether Wasdale where you will find [The Screes Inn](#) and [The Strands Inn](#) for refreshments. Beyond the village, the views get better and the road gets narrower before passing [Wasdale Hall Youth Hostel](#) on the right and soon crossing a cattle grid which brings you to the open shores of Wastwater lake. The following section of road,

alongside Wastwater and on to Wasdale Head, is arguably the most scenic in the whole Lake District and is well worth driving. Shortly, you see the stone shelter which marks Countess Beck viewpoint with a small rough parking area on the right. If that parking is full, there are a number of other rough roadside parking areas if you continue.

Distance: 17.7 miles

Location: Wastwater, Countess Beck

Coordinates: N 54.43443, W 3.31227

Wastwater is a remote and beautiful lake, surrounded by dramatic scenery. The view from Countess Beck viewpoint, up the lake to the high mountains beyond, is outstanding and was once voted 'Britain's favourite view'. These mountains include the highest peaks in England, Scafell Pike and Sca Fell, along with the pyramid forms of Great Gable and Yewbarrow. The impressive high screes along the southern shore tumble down over 500m to the water and continue down below water level to a depth of around 80m.

The lake is the deepest in England and one of the clearest, making it popular for diving. The whole effect is fabulous and makes the area such an awe-inspiring place.

The shoreline tends to be quite rocky with small shingle beaches every so often and areas of grass and bracken behind. This pattern begins around the Countess Beck shelter and continues towards Wasdale Head for approx 1 mile. The remoteness of the area means it rarely gets very busy and you can normally find a quiet place to appreciate the surroundings. Parking is free but there are no facilities nearby.



Wastwater, near Countess Beck

Travelling:

Continue along the picturesque Wasdale road, alongside Wastwater. The road descends to cross Countess Beck and meet a T junction where you turn right towards Wasdale Head. The views over the lake towards the surrounding mountains are exceptional but some care is needed on the narrow winding road. There are a number of small rough parking areas on the roadside where you can stop to admire the views and wonder down to the lake. Approx 1 mile beyond Countess Beck, cross a cattle grid and Nether Beck through a wooded section with some rough parking and lake access beyond. Approx 0.4 miles beyond this, cross Overbeck Bridge and the car park is just beyond on the left.



Wastwater, Overbeck Bridge

Distance: 19.4 miles

Location: Wastwater, Overbeck Bridge

Coordinates: N 54.44993, W 3.28455

A wonderful lakeshore access point which has limited space but some open grass, shingle shore and a lovely stream. The main feature again are the fabulous views across the lake towards Scafell Pike, Sca Fell, The Screes and several other surrounding high fells. Access couldn't be better with a good sized car park giving direct access to the shore. The shore then gives easy access to the water but care should be taken as the lake does get deep quickly. Over Beck, which runs into the lake here, gives better paddling potential with its

normally shallow water gently cascading towards the lake. The area is ideal for a picnic in a setting that is difficult to beat even by Lake District standards. A small donation to the National Trust is welcomed for parking. There are public toilets at Lake Head, on route to the next stop at Wasdale Head.

Travelling:

Turn left out of the car park and continue along the Wasdale road on another open section following the lake shore. Again, there are fantastic views as you get closer to the big mountains. Shortly, a cattle grid marks the end of the lake and not far beyond on the right is the entrance to Wasdale campsite and Lake Head National Trust pay and display car park where there are public toilets. Continue along the valley road for approx 0.7 miles to a large open parking area on the right. This is the main car park for Wasdale Head and is effectively the end of the road.

Distance: 21.1 miles

Location: Wasdale Head

Coordinates: N 54.46511, W 3.25634

Wasdale Head is a small village at the head of Wasdale valley. It is probably the most remote and most dramatically situated of any Lake District village, at the end of a long dead end road from the west Cumbrian coast and surrounded by some fantastic mountain scenery. The mountains include some of the highest in the National Park, Scafell Pike, Sca Fell, Great Gable and Kirk Fell, to name but a few. The village is a popular base for mountain walkers and climbers with some low level walks available along the valley floor. As well

as the highest mountain and deepest lake in the country, Wasdale also boasts one of the smallest churches. [St Olaf's](#) is situated in trees near the village. Within the village is the popular [Wasdale Head Inn](#) and next door is a small shop selling walking gear. Free car park, 5 minute walk from the village. No public parking in the village. Nearest public toilets at nearby Lake Head car park.



Wasdale Head

Travelling:

From the car park, retrace your steps back down the valley. The views going the other way are not quite as impressive but still very good. Turn left at Countess Beck, following the lake towards Santon Bridge. Continue beyond the lake, again passing Wasdale Hall Youth Hostel. Approx 1 mile beyond, take the left turn towards Santon Bridge and pass the [Sawmill Cafe and Farm Shop](#) on the left. Soon, turn left over the River Irt and continue along the narrow scenic road for approx 2 miles to a T junction in Santon Bridge village. A short distance to the right is [The Bridge Inn](#) for refreshments. Turn left at the T junction towards Eskdale. Now on a slightly better road, climb through attractive woodland with the Forestry Commission sites of Irton Pike on the left and Parkgate on the right. Soon descend and pass the [Bower House Inn](#) on the right. After a further 0.3 miles, just beyond a house on the left, take the minor left turn towards Miterdale. Follow the very narrow road, past St Bega's Primary School, for almost 1 mile to a gate and just beyond is a large grassy area on the left, next to the River Mite.



Miterdale access area

Distance: 31.1 miles

Location: Miterdale access area

Coordinates: N 54.39877, W 3.31619

This is a very secluded and peaceful access area within the unspoilt valley of Miterdale. There is a good grassy area next to the small River Mite which is ideal for a picnic and play. The site is mostly surrounded by attractive woodland but is quite open and you can see the outline of Sca Fell mountain up the valley in the distance. A good footpath leads across the river and up the valley if you fancy a walk. Roadside parking is free but there are no facilities.

Travelling:

Retrace your steps back down the minor road to the T junction and turn left. Shortly, enter the village of Eskdale Green and continue past Eskdale Stores on the left and St Bega's church on the right. A short distance beyond is a small parking area on the left, adjacent to the public toilets.

Distance: 32.6 miles

Location: Eskdale Green

Coordinates: N 54.39000, W 3.32312

Eskdale Green is a pleasant village in the heart of the wonderful Eskdale valley. There are a few points of interest, including Giggie Alley woodland and Japanese garden adjacent to the parking area. The secluded garden dates from 1913 and although it was abandoned many years ago it is currently undergoing restoration. You can explore the garden and surrounding woodland on various footpaths which provide a pleasant stroll. Access is a little along the track next to the car park. The village has a small [shop](#) and there are two stops nearby for the [Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway](#), at Irton Road and The Green. Free parking with adjacent toilet facilities.



Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway, Eskdale Green

Travelling:

Continue along the Eskdale road and soon descend to cross the miniature Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway. The Green station is on the right which includes a small free car park. Continue a short distance to the [King George IV Inn](#) on the right which provides refreshments in a lovely setting. Take the left turn

opposite the pub towards Boot. Follow the picturesque valley road which soon follows the River Esk on the right and the Eskdale railway on the left. If you are lucky you may see one of the small trains rattling along. Approx 1.5 miles beyond the pub, pass the small Beckfoot station on the left and approx 0.2 miles further on, opposite some buildings, take a minor right turn. Continue 0.2 miles over Trough House Bridge and the car park is shortly on the left.



Stanley Force viewing platform

Distance: 35.0 miles

Location: Trough House Bridge car park

Coordinates: N 54.39141, W 3.27796

This small car park gives good access to a couple of natural wonders. Firstly, back towards the road bridge, is Trough House Bridge access area which is quite a small rocky and wooded riverbank where the River Esk passes underneath the bridge via a deep gorge. The water immediately downstream of the bridge is very deep and clear and ideal for bathing. Further downstream is some shallower water for paddling.

Secondly, is Stanley Force waterfall which is just over half a mile walk from the car park. The path continues along the track from the car park. Once you meet Stanley Ghyll, the path becomes narrower and rougher as it heads into the impressive narrow canyon with high rocky cliffs and precariously perched trees. From 2019, a lot of work has been done to clear the canyon of excess vegetation and improve access. You can only get as far as the second bridge now, with glimpses of the waterfalls ahead, before the path heads steeply up to the cliff tops above. Here, you will find a quite unexpected and spectacular metal [viewing platform](#), which hangs out over a vertigo inducing 150 foot drop and gives wonderful views over the canyon and beyond towards Boot village and Scafell mountain. Free car park but no facilities.

Travelling:

Return to the T junction at the main valley road and turn right towards Boot. In 0.2 miles is Dalegarth Station on the left and the car park turn is immediately before the station.

Distance: 35.4 miles

Location: Dalegarth Station car park

Coordinates: N 54.39505, W 3.27460

Dalegarth Station is the terminus for the miniature [Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway](#) and is often a hive of activity with regular trains coming and going during the summer (less so during the winter). The line was originally opened in 1875 to transport Iron Ore down the valley but is purely for tourists nowadays. A ride on the small train is a great way to see the picturesque valley with several minor stations along the way and you can continue to the coast at Ravenglass which is about 7 miles away. If you don't fancy a train ride, it is still fascinating to watch the small steam engines at work, especially on the small turntable where they turn around for the trip back down the valley. The car park is pay and display with some picnic tables by the river and a small play area. The station building has a cafe and toilets.



Dalegarth Station, Eskdale Railway

Dalegarth Station car park is also the best place to park for a visit to Boot which is approx 0.3 miles walk along the road. It is a pretty little village in a picturesque setting with a small shop and a couple of pubs providing refreshments at the [Boot Inn](#) and the [Brook House Inn](#). At the far end of the village, over the ancient packhorse bridge, is the fascinating [Eskdale Mill](#) which still maintains its historic working machinery and is one of the oldest water powered corn mills in the country.



Eskdale Mill, Boot

Walking back out of Boot, towards the main road, if you [walk](#) straight across the road a track takes you approx 0.3 miles down to the River Esk where the quaint old church of [St Catherine's](#) is in a lovely secluded riverside setting with some benches from where you can appreciate the surroundings.

Travelling:

Turn right out of the car park and retrace your steps back down the picturesque valley road to the King George IV Inn. Turn left at the T junction and shortly pass over Forge Bridge. Immediately over the bridge on the right is the access area parking.



Forge Bridge access area

Distance: 37.3 miles

Location: Forge Bridge access area

Coordinates: N 54.38395, W 3.31215

This is a small open access area on the wonderful River Esk. It isn't ideal for a picnic with very little grass or seating but there is a good expanse of stone/shingle and a nice clear pool in the river for paddling and bathing, just downstream of the old bridge. There is free parking in the adjacent layby and the river is immediately through the stile in the wall. There are no facilities on site.

Travelling:

Continue away from Forge Bridge for approx 0.4 miles to take a right turn, signposted 'Birkby Road'. This 3 mile section of winding road is single track with passing places, so you need to watch out for approaching vehicles, although it is normally quiet. The road roughly follows the River Esk through some pleasant countryside and woodland until eventually arriving at a T junction with the main A595.

Turn right towards Ravenglass, cross the River Esk and its valley, then head up Muncaster hill. On the left are the grounds of Muncaster Castle where you might see colourful Rhododendrons in spring. Soon, pass over a minor summit and descend. In a short distance you can't miss the large Muncaster Castle car park on the right, with the ornate entrance gates on the left.

Distance: 45.0 miles

Location: Muncaster Castle

Coordinates: N 54.35740, W 3.38987

[Muncaster Castle](#) is the impressive residence of the Pennington family who have lived there for over 800 years. The Castle has been extended over the years and you can wonder around its elegant rooms, historic furnishings and works of art. The Castle is reputedly haunted and the audio tour takes you to a haunted room with some creepy stories.



Muncaster Castle

Outside, the Castle has some wonderful gardens, terraces and woodland overlooking the attractive Esk valley. There are plenty of walks around the grounds which are particularly good for Rhododendrons in spring. Also in the grounds is the [Hawk & Owl Centre](#) which includes some spectacular birds and flying displays.

There are various other family attractions, cafes, gift shops and toilet facilities. Generally open daily between Easter and October, plus February school holidays. Weekends in March, November and December. Admission fees apply, Castle tour is extra. Free car park.

Travelling:

Turn right out of the car park on the A595 and after approx 0.4 miles take the left turn to Ravenglass. The road descends into the village and you pass under the Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway line then the main Cumbrian coast line. The estuary appears on the right, then the road bears left and soon enters the main car park.



Ravenglass Station

Distance: 46.1 miles

Location: Ravenglass village car park

Coordinates: N 54.35529, W 3.40949

Return to start point.



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