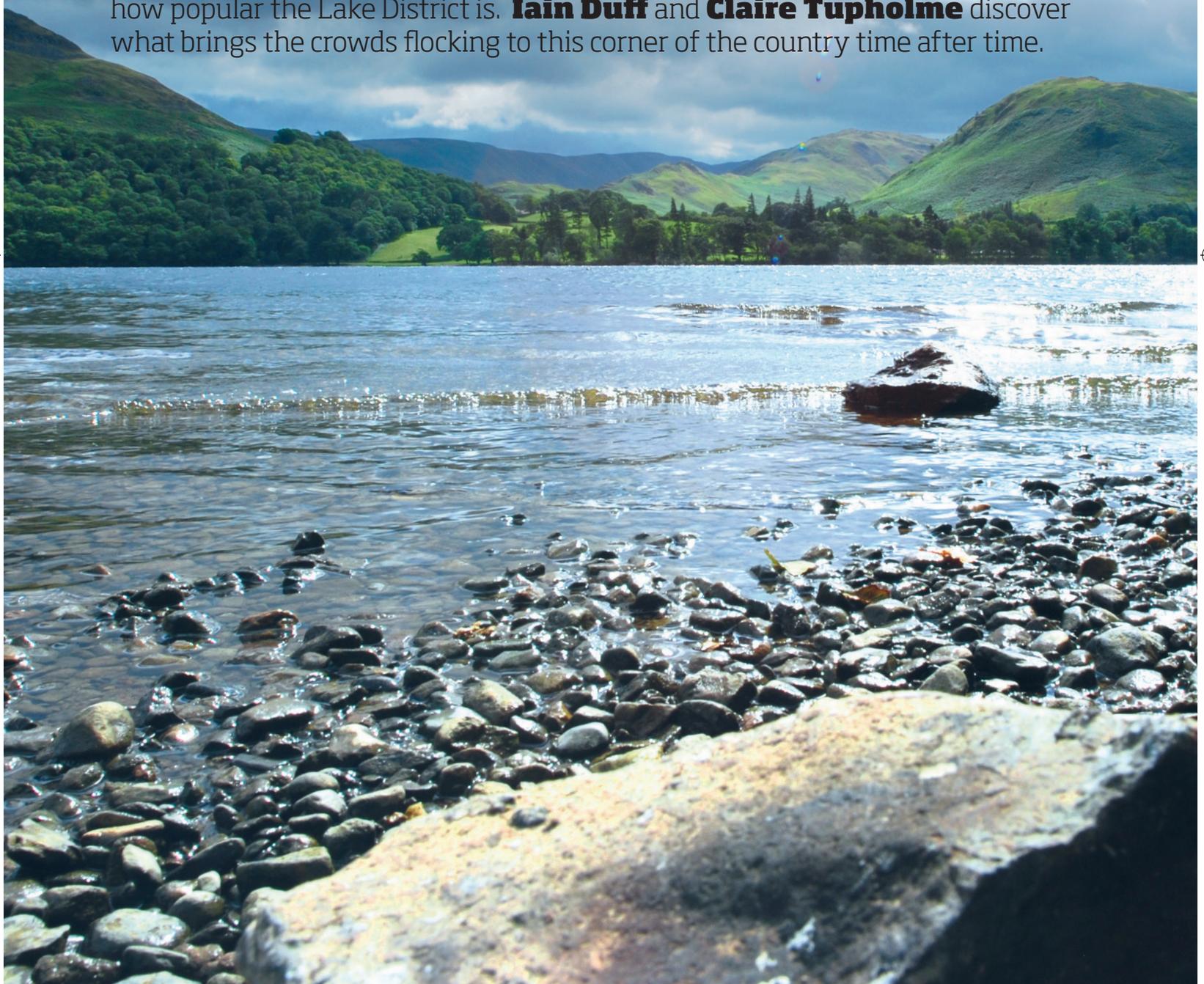


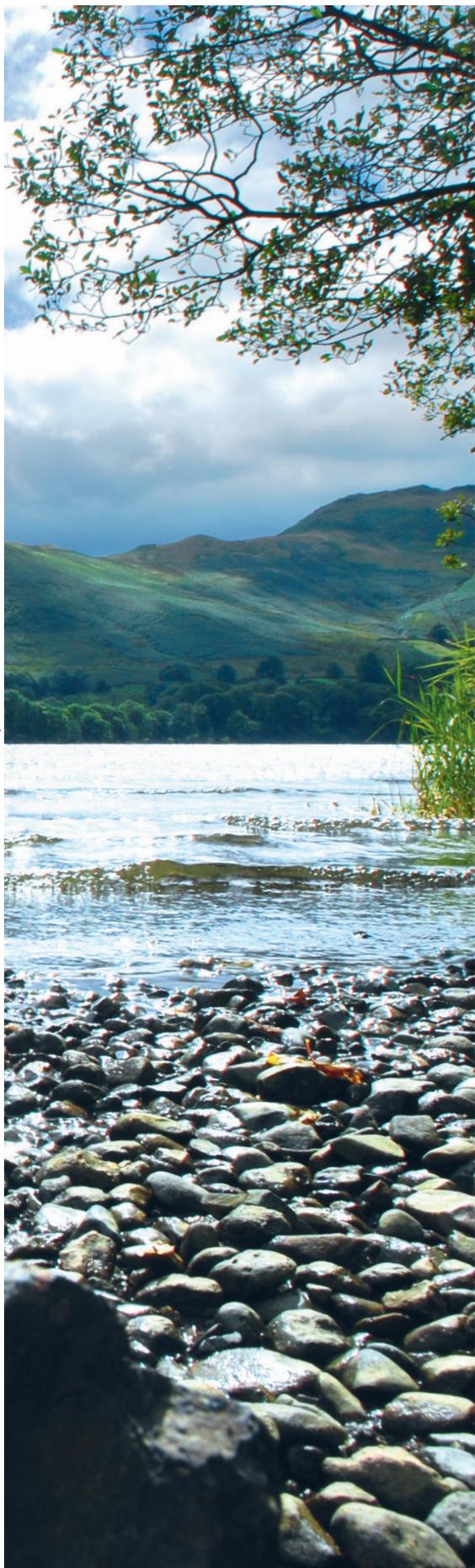


## ▶▶ THE LAKE DISTRICT

# WHY WE LOVE THE LAKES

You only have to visit Windermere on a Saturday afternoon in August to appreciate how popular the Lake District is. **Iain Duff** and **Claire Tupholme** discover what brings the crowds flocking to this corner of the country time after time.





If there's one part of the country where campers are spoilt for choice it's the Lake District.

As well as being one of the most beautiful parts of the country it offers something for everyone, from solo backpackers to large families enjoying a summer holiday.

For a start there is a vast array of places to pitch your tent. As befits an area of such rugged splendour, some of the sites are hidden away on remote fells with little more than a portaloos to their name in the way of facilities. But you'll also find numerous luxury family holiday parks, packed with every facility you will ever need. In between there are countless wonderful sites that would be perfect for family trips or as a base camp for exploring the magnificent Lakeland countryside.

Although the sites come in all shapes and sizes, the common factor is that they are almost all surrounded by truly breathtaking scenery and that's what makes camping here such a memorable experience. Whatever your purpose for visiting this part of the world – and as we'll see there are myriad reasons for coming here – you'll be awestruck by just how beautiful it is. Everywhere you turn there are tranquil lakes backed by towering peaks and whether you're a walker, a biker, a climber, a shopper or simply a lover of the great outdoors, you can't fail to be impressed.

So, at the risk of sounding like Mrs Merton asking the lovely Debbie McGee what first attracted her to millionaire Paul Daniels, apart from the fantastic scenery and the magnificent campsites, just what is it about the Lake District that makes it so popular? Well, the main reason it gets so many visitors is the fact that it is all things to all people. It's a Mecca for adventure seekers but is equally popular with those looking for peace and quiet. History buffs rub shoulders with fell walkers while groups of young people trying to follow in the footsteps of Bear Grylls share campsites with young families enjoying a weekend away.

First and foremost, Lakeland is all about enjoying the outdoors, either on foot or bicycle. And for lovers of all things outdoors it really is a special place. It is the largest of the United Kingdom's National Parks, containing 16 lakes – including Windermere, the largest in England – and more than 150 high peaks. Four of them are over 3000ft – including England's highest mountain, Scafell Pike, which stands at 3206ft. According to the local

tourist board, there are six national nature reserves, 100 sites of special scientific interest, and more than 50 dales, but as impressive as they are, the stats only tell part of the story. The only way to fully appreciate the beauty of the Lakes is to get out there and see it for yourself.

If you prefer to look at mountains than climb them, then Lakeland has plenty more going on. In fact there are 400 towns, villages and hamlets within its 885 square miles and pretty much every one has something to offer. In the north Lakes is Keswick, which sits on the shore of Derwentwater and is surrounded by the fells of Skiddaw, Catbells and Grizedale Pike. It's a bustling town with plenty going on and an ideal base to explore the Lakes. Sadly the Cars of the Stars museum is no longer open but the town is worth a visit for its pencil museum alone. It's a place that holds special memories for me – it's the first place I ever went camping on my own (on a site just outside the town) and the first camping destination for me and my wife a few years later. We've been back several times since with the kids and it's always a pleasure.

The water of Ullswater, the second biggest lake in England, is worth some time on your visit to the Lakes, if just to admire its stunning beauty and take a few photographs. You can park at various intervals on the road alongside the lake and you'll see the bank covered in wild daffodils. It is here Wordsworth was inspired to write his famous poem 'Daffodils' when he sheltered here during a storm.

Elsewhere are the charming towns of Ulverston, Kirkby Lonsdale and Cockermouth as well as Whitehaven on the west coast and Penrith and Appleby to the east. But as bustling and thriving as they are, none can match the popularity of the towns in the central Lakes. Kendal, Windermere, Bowness, Ambleside and Grasmere can be unbearably busy at times, but they are worth seeing so it makes sense to try and visit them outwith the peak times if you can. In fact, this is the only downside of the Lake District. It can sometime feel just too popular. To an extent it's the price you have to pay. But don't be put off by the crowds, because if you're clever enough you can always find a quiet corner, even at the peak times. And if all else fails, just kick back and relax on the campsite with a mug of tea (or something a little stronger) and watch the world go by. Slowly.



# THE LAKE DISTRICT

## STAY AT

### THE QUIET SITE

Ullswater, Cumbria CA11 0LS

☎ 07768 727016

🌐 [www.thequietsite.co.uk](http://www.thequietsite.co.uk)

**Price** Tent and 2 adults with electric £16-£30. Extra adult £5.00. Dog £1.00.

**Open** All year

**Facilities** Newly refurbished amenity building, family bathrooms and laundry room. Dishwashing sinks and access to a microwave, fridge and freezer. Well-stocked shop on site, and a large children's playground plus indoor playroom.

The Quiet Site campsite is situated between Little Mell Fell and Ullswater with perfect views and an alpine feel. All of the pitches are terraced and a mix of grass and pea gravel, offering flat camping

areas. This site is like heaven for the walking enthusiast and maps of walks are available from reception. One leads to nearby National Trust Aira Force Waterfalls which leads through a mixture of open land and woodland terrain, with the falls definitely worth a visit. A distinctive feature of The Quiet Site is its old-world bar housed in an old converted barn with open log fire and pool table. This is a welcoming and cosy place, perfect for days with inclement weather or for a relaxing drink after a day exploring the surrounding fells and countryside. You can also hire electric bikes from the site and enjoy a network of up to 60 miles in the Ullswater area.



### PARK CLIFFE CAMPING & CARAVAN ESTATE

Birks Road, Windermere, Cumbria LA23 3PG

☎ 01539 531344

🌐 [www.parkcliffe.co.uk](http://www.parkcliffe.co.uk)

**Price** Tent and 2 adults £20.50-£25.50. Extra adult £5.00. Dog £2.00.

**Open** 1 March - 10 November

**Facilities** Modern shower block with underfloor heating and dry changing space in showers and bathrooms available to hire. There's also a fully-equipped laundrette.

This is a great campsite which is tranquil and has great views from its pitches. Park Cliffe has two camping areas. The first, Ghyll Side, is across a minor lane from the main park and allows you to reserve a pitch and electric hook-up if needed. The second, Fell Side, is set on undulating slopes giving the stunning views of the surrounding area. You choose your own pitches here and there is no electric. The campsite has a list of walks in the area and other local activities include cruises on Lake Windermere, the South Lakes Wild Animal Park, many outdoor activities and watersports too. The on-site restaurant and bar is perfect for drinks or a meal at any time of day, and the licensed shop stocks a selection of groceries and camping goods. There's also an adventure playground and small indoor games room to keep children occupied.

### LANEFOOT FARM CAMPSITE

Lanefoot Farm, Thornthwaite, Keswick, Cumbria CA12 5RZ

☎ 01768 778097

🌐 [www.stayinthornthwaite.co.uk/?c=lanefootfarm](http://www.stayinthornthwaite.co.uk/?c=lanefootfarm)

**Price** Contact campsite direct

**Open** 1 March - 31 October

**Facilities** Toilets and heated showers. Electric hook-ups. Also a drying room and a small shop stocking the essentials.



Park Cliffe



## THINGS TO DO, PLACES TO GO?

### ULLSWATER STEAMERS

No visit to the Lakes is complete without a trip across the water on a famous Ullswater steamer. These began sailing in 1849 and then in the 1930s the paddle steamers were converted to diesel as the paddles kept getting tangled in the weed. Today five operate on the lake. You can board at Glenridding and enjoy the journey across the lake to the jetty at Howtown. While here you can follow a circular walking route over Hallin Fell and enjoy views back over Ullswater. Then follow the alternative route back down into Pooley Bridge which is another departure point for the steamers back to Glenridding. The village of Pooley Bridge offers a riverside walk, pubs, cafes and gift shops.

### RSPB LEIGHTON MOSS

When visiting this RSPB nature reserve expect to see lapwing, grebe, bittern, cormorant and other unusual species. The reserve stretches for miles and visitor walkways lead to viewing points across six major lakes, as well as some smaller bogs and ponds. Wooded areas, reed beds, and piles of dead twigs provide habitats for all kinds of wildlife and the reserve is visited by red deer in the summer months.

### SOUTH LAKES WILDLIFE PARK

A perfect family day out, the South Lakes Wildlife Park offers a few unusual treats. Firstly, different

species are allowed to roam together within their enclosures, which better reflects the mix of animals in the wild. Secondly, they also let humans inside too! This means that emus, prairie dogs, lemurs and squirrel monkeys all interact with each other and with the visitors. There is a no-touch rule, but this doesn't stop the experience being one not to miss. Another unusual feature is the fact that they feed the tigers and jaguars by pinning the food to the top of a telegraph pole, meaning the big cats have to run and climb the pole to get their dinner.

### SIZERGH CASTLE GARDENS

Situated near Kendal, this is a medieval house with gardens that include a lake, pond, ferns and rock garden. The castle is open from Sunday to Thursday for visitors to go inside to explore the stately interiors, dark panelling and grand furnishings. The gardens, estate, cafe and shop are all open at different times depending on the time of year.

### BEATRIX POTTER'S HOUSE

Hilltop, the former home of Beatrix Potter, is located near Lake Windermere. The cottage, owned by the National Trust, showcases her life, work and passion for wildlife. It is full of items owned by Beatrix - her original floral wallpaper and her paintings being some of the artefacts. In the kitchen, plastic toy mice represent the real mice, which

probably snuck into her kitchen and inspired her stories. Outside is her walled vegetable garden where rabbits would have appeared and inspired her stories about Peter Rabbit and friends. Today, carved wooden rabbits stand in the flower-beds for the visiting children to enjoy. Some of her letters are displayed in the upstairs study. One, a letter to a friend, tells the story of Peter Rabbit and is covered with illustrations. Beatrix's four poster bed and doll's house provide a little more insight to the personality of the slightly eccentric animal lover and novelist.

### AIRA FORCE, ULLSWATER

This is a National Trust area and parking is easy in the Trust's car park. It's a half-mile walk from the car park to the falls, through lovely ancient woodland to where the water falls 70ft from below a stone footbridge. You can view the Force from below or climb higher up the path and cross the footbridge to admire the awe-inspiring view back down. There's plenty of walking to do in the surrounding woodland and following the river. The crowds will swarm the pathways in season but late season mornings leave this spectacle devoid of admirers, a high-profile Lakeland beauty spot at its best. The surrounding woodland is part of an arboretum created in the 1840s, with over 200 specimen conifers from across the world, including a Sitka Spruce, which is now over 100ft high.

Lanefoot is located between Bassenthwaite Lake and Derwentwater with views of the surrounding fells. The campsite is divided into two fields, both of which are about two acres in size. The Meadow Field has some tree screening and is a more secluded camping area. The Open Field has views towards Skiddaw and Lord's Seat and presents open camping with lots of room. Campfires are permitted on site and kindling and dried logs are available to buy. Lanefoot sits below the Whinlatter Forest Park and it's a great site for bikers and walkers. Because it is a mountain forest the mountain bike trails are demanding and the views stunning. There's also a play trail for children and a visitors' centre. Bikes can be hired here and there is a café, picnic areas and viewpoints.

### CONISTON PARK COPPICE CARAVAN CLUB SITE

Park Gate, Coniston, Cumbria LA21 8LA

☎ 01539 441555

🌐 [www.caravanclub.co.uk](http://www.caravanclub.co.uk)

**Price** Tent and 2 adults £15.90-£23.60 (member rates). Extra adult £5.30-£7.20.

**Open** 15 February - 4 November

**Facilities** Toilet block, facilities for the disabled and a laundry. Public transport within a mile of the site. Nearest town for supplies is Coniston (1 mile).

Coniston Park Coppice is set in 63 acres of National Trust woodland, with pitches grouped in open glades. The draw of this campsite is its secluded wooded location and close proximity to Coniston Water. A short walk of approximately 400 yards brings you to the lakeside and a launching point where you can watch others messing about in boats, or try your hand at a range of water sports like dinghy sailing, windsurfing and canoeing. Coniston Pier is only one mile away where you can catch a steamboat ride on the Coniston Gondola and hire boats. The site is also ideal for exploring the beauty of Lakeland and the fells. There are a range of paths to explore and Grizedale Forest provides the perfect opportunity for a spot of birdwatching. Non-members welcome.



Coniston Park Coppice Caravan Club Site



Eskdale Camping and Caravanning Club Site

### ESKDALE CAMPING & CARAVANNING CLUB SITE

Boot, Holmrook, Cumbria CA19 1TH

☎ 01946 723253

🌐 [www.campingandcaravanningclub.co.uk](http://www.campingandcaravanningclub.co.uk)

**Price** Tent and 2 adults £23.00-£27.50. Extra adult £7.90-£10.15.

**Open** 1 March - 14 January

**Facilities** Toilets, showers and wash basins, disabled facilities and a family shower room. Dishwashing, laundry and drying room. There's also the addition of a shop (selling basic food supplies and camping gear), play area and ice pack freezing facility.

Set in idyllic Lake District walking country and a valley setting makes this campsite a walkers' paradise. England's highest peak - Scafell Pike - can be reached from site, as can England's deepest lake - Wastwater. For those who prefer flatter terrain, there's a route which follows the River Esk. The village of Boot offers three traditional pubs within walking distance of the site and the Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway terminates at Dalegarth Station which is a few minutes' walk from the site. Also worth checking out is Stanley Ghyll Force, a 60ft high waterfall in a deep and narrow gorge. This site has a drying room which is extremely handy for walkers to get their boots and coats clean and dry. Many of the pubs in the local area welcome muddy boots and are dog-friendly. Non-members welcome.

### LOW WRAY NATIONAL TRUST CAMPSITE

Ambleside, Cumbria LA22 0JA

☎ 01539 463862

🌐 [www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)

**Price** From £13.75 (2 adults, small tent)

**Open** 6 April - 31 October

**Facilities** New shop and reception selling local produce; Kids playground; hot water/showers/toilets; washing up area; lakeside beach; boat launching for non-powered craft; camping pods available

The National Trust has four campsites on its land in the Lake District and as well as enjoying excellent facilities and spectacular locations, all campsite fees go towards supporting their conservation projects. So as well as enjoying yourself, you can feel pleased that you're helping to protect the countryside for future generations. Three miles from both Hawkshead and Ambleside, Low Wray campsite is set on the banks of Windermere and has 200 pitches. It is a fairly basic site geared around walkers, anglers and those looking to canoe or sail on the lake. The campsite shop sells basic groceries and there are two pubs within a two-mile radius. The site itself has an orienteering course (just buy a map from reception) and mountain bikes to hire. There are plenty of cycling routes both on quiet country lanes and off road and the site staff should be able to give you plenty of advice.



# ▶▶ THE LAKE DISTRICT



Chapel House Farm

## CHAPEL HOUSE FARM

Stonethwaite, Borrowdale, Keswick, Cumbria CA12 5XG

☎ 01768 777256

🌐 [www.chapelhousefarmcampsite.co.uk/](http://www.chapelhousefarmcampsite.co.uk/)

**Price** Tent and 2 adults £6.00. Extra adult £6.00

**Open** All year

**Facilities** Toilet and shower block. Bed and breakfast at the farmhouse. Several pubs nearby. Nearest shops in Keswick, a 20-minute drive.

Chapel House Farm's campsite is a back to nature site, consisting of a single open field in the valley of Borrowdale, and the view is astonishing. Cars are not allowed on the site itself and must remain in the car park, making the place more relaxed and adding to that feel that camping is a return to the simple life. There's really no need to use it again either, as there's a bus stop outside the site, with regular services to Keswick and even over Honister Pass to Buttermere. When staying here you should take advantage of the many fell-walking opportunities, and Borrowdale is ringed by the high fells. But there's also miles of relaxed river and lake-side strolling in the wooded valley. Chapel House Farm is popular with young families too, with the nearby Stonethwaite Beck, and a little gorge called Black Moss Pot in Langstrath Beck being great for children to splash about in.

## SIDE FARM CAMPSITE

Patterdale, Penrith, Cumbria CA11 0NP

☎ 01768 482337

**Price** Tent with 2 adults £16.00. Extra adult £8.00. Car £2.00.

**Open** 29 March - 31 October

**Facilities** Clean, simple facilities of toilets and showers, with a covered washing up area with washing machine and dryer.

Side Farm, on the eastern side of the Lake District, is one of the most scenically situated campsites, sandwiched between the slopes of Place Fell and the shores of Ullswater. The view across the lake to the Helvellyn Fells is beautiful and if you choose a pitch here, you can open your tent to that stunning sight every morning. There's a small pebbled beach onto the lake, where you can launch canoes and paddle Ullswater. For those who prefer walking, board one of the Ullswater steamers at Glenridding, sail to Howtown, then stroll back along the lakeside path to Patterdale and the site. For the more adventurous walker, the slopes of Helvellyn will call to you. The walk which you should do is the dance across the top of Striding Edge - one of the most attention-grabbing and exhilarating in England. The site itself has flat pitching and simple facilities. There are local pubs providing food nearby and a small tea room based at the farm.

## WASDALE HEAD

Cumbria CA20 1EX

☎ 01539 463862

🌐 [www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)

**Price** Tent and 2 adults £13.75-£18.00.

**Open** 1 March - 30 September

**Facilities** Showers, toilets and disabled facilities. Washing up area, laundry and shop selling local produce.

Wasdale campsite nestles under the Scafell mountain range at the head of Wastwater, the deepest lake in England. This stunning place is attractive for its remoteness and peace. The dramatic landscape will inspire the most adventurous outdoor enthusiast.



Side Farm Campsite

## EATING OUT

### SUN INN

6 Market Street, Kirkby Lonsdale, Cumbria LA6 2AU

☎ 01524 271965

This restaurant combines a 17th Century inn, traditional bar with oak floors and real fires, with a contemporary restaurant and five-star accommodation. The award-winning menu includes locally sourced food and award-winning sausages and bacon from a local Kirkby Lonsdale butcher.

The bar is also dog friendly, so perfect after a hard day's walking as you can relax in the bar with your four-legged friend and enjoy a choice of the full menu too. The small and intimate restaurant serves a range of meals, from starter-size portions of meat, fish and bread dishes to pub favourites and Sunday roasts.

### CANTEEN BABA GANOUSH

3 Berry's Yard, Kendal, Cumbria LA9 4AB

☎ 01539 731072

This is not your typical cafe. Bacon rolls, sandwiches and baked potatoes share the menu with risotto, cassoulets and vegetarian mezze boards. But it is also not a restaurant - no bookings are taken and there's a no frills, no fuss approach which is reflected in the prices too. Baba Ganoush is a daytime eatery, serving breakfasts, lunches and snacks. Be tempted by the delicious cake counter and if you're in a rush, the original Baba Ganoush food shop offers takeaway. But as with the canteen, this is not your usual takeaway, there's a deli with a range of cheeses, olives and antipasti, plus a salad bar, cakes, traybakes and a range of soups.

### ANGEL LANE CHIPPY

17 Angel Lane, Penrith, Cumbria CA11 7BP

☎ 01768 866762

England's highest mountain, Scafell Pike, is within striking distance as are many other high fell walking routes. If you like to be amongst big scenery, then Wasdale Head is about as good as it gets in Britain, with the mountains towering above the campsite on all sides. The Wasdale Inn is a short walk away for those who fancy some pub grub after a day exploring the hills. The local area is ideal for outdoor activities and watersports. Nearby family attractions include Muncaster Castle and Gardens, home to the World Owl Centre with over 200 amazing birds.

For a best of British tradition head to this little chip shop tucked away up a side street in the market town of Penrith. As well as the takeaway there's a cafe upstairs serving all your usual chip shop fare, plus homemade pies and specials such as curry, chilli con carne and lasagne. Angel Lane's steak and ale pie comes recommended, due to its tender slow-cooked met, layers of filo and lashings of the shop's own special gravy.

### BROUGHTON VILLAGE BAKERY & CAFÉ

Broughton in Furness, Cumbria LA20 6HQ

☎ 01229 716284

Using traditional baking methods, this bakery and cafe offers home-made soups, quiches, pies, pasties and cakes and desserts. You can takeaway or sit awhile in the comfort of the relaxed cafe. Comfort is the order of the day, with a wood burning stove for keeping cosy on wintry days and a cosy sofa for total relaxation. Breakfasts, lunches and snacks are served and include beef stew, sandwich melts and a 'sandwich of the day' and daily specials.

### CHESTERS BY THE RIVER

Skelwith Bridge, Nr Ambleside, Cumbria LA22 9NJ

☎ 01539 434711

This is a smart, modern cafe, bakery and shop, near Ambleside by the River Brathay at the start of the Langdale Valley. From the small kitchen, fresh goods are cooked from scratch every day for customers to enjoy for breakfast and lunch and to take away. Produce is all locally sourced and the cafe can seat about 90, with doors opening to an outside decking area in the summer, with views over the river. The shop sells everything from cards, books, furniture and gifts.

**Did you know?** You can read and write reviews of over 5,900 campsites with our FREE online Campsite Finder. Visit: [www.campingmagazine.co.uk](http://www.campingmagazine.co.uk)

