

# Kirkby Stephen, Eden Valley and the North Pennines 3 Day Itinerary...

*...Let's go.*

**Visit** Lake District, Cumbria

**Highlights:** market towns,  
history, walks, scenery,  
outdoor activities

**Days:** Three

**Locations:** Kirkby Stephen,  
Appleby-in-Westmorland,  
Alston

Get off the beaten track and pay a visit to East Cumbria. Discover traditional market towns, lovely riverside strolls and spectacular scenery with this fantastic 3-day itinerary taking you from Kirkby Stephen onto the Eden Valley and up into the Northern Pennines.

## Day One: Kirkby Stephen

Your first stop is Kirkby Stephen. Relax and unwind in this charming market town full of historic buildings, narrow ginnels and cobbled yards. It's also a brilliant location for walking with eleven long distance trails passing through the town.

Start your day at the Upper Eden Visitor Centre in the centre of town to pick up more local info and browse their array of local produce for sale. Then, pass through the market square and step through the old cloisters into grounds of the Parish Church also known as the 'Cathedral of the Dales'. Wander along the high street with its fantastic array of independent shops and bustling cafés – all adding to the atmosphere.



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The banks of the River Eden provide the perfect place to stop a while and take a break. Cross the 16th century packhorse bridge, Frank's Bridge, and continue further to find the Poetry Path. This trail features 12 poems carved into blocks of stone, all telling the story of the hill farmer's relationship with the landscapes in and around the Upper Eden.

## Day One: Around Kirkby Stephen

Situated on the edge of the North Pennines National Landscape and the Yorkshire Dales National Park, the town is the perfect base for exploring these beautiful landscapes.

Venture into the peaceful Mallerstang valley. Here you'll find stunning moorland views and historic sites such as Lammerside and Pendragon Castles.

For wildlife lovers, the [Smardale Gill Nature Reserve](#) is a hidden gem. An accessible track runs along the old railway line all the way to Smardale viaduct – look out for an excellent variety of bird and plant life along the way.

For those seeking to tick off a fell top, Nine Standards Rigg (662m) is a brilliant option. This 8-mile out-and-back walk follows Alfred Wainwright's Coast to Coast route. From the summit take in the collection of ancient dry-stone cairns and the vast moorland views beyond.

Inspired to carry on walking? [Coast to Coast Packhorse](#) based in Kirkby Stephen offers guided and self-guided holidays for those looking to complete the full Coast to Coast route.



## Day Two: Eden Valley

From its source in the fells above Kirkby Stephen, the River Eden flows northward for 80 miles, through the Eden Valley and on to the sea at the Solway Firth. On day two of this itinerary, you will follow suit and head north into the heart of the Eden Valley. In between the Pennines and the Lake District fells, this area offers a brilliant mix of peaceful countryside and picturesque towns and villages. There's also plenty of history and culture to soak up along the way.

Enjoy riverside walks through countryside dotted with castles, churches and waterfalls. For walkers, the Lady Anne's Way and the Eden Way run through the area, while cyclists can enjoy sections of the Pennine Cycleway and the Sea to Sea (C2C) route.



The most scenic railway in England, the Settle to Carlisle line, runs through the Eden Valley as well, with stations at Kirkby Stephen and Appleby. Also in the Eden Valley, you'll find [Acorn Bank](#), a place looked after by the National Trust. Visit the walled gardens, the lily-filled pond and traditional orchards carpeted with daffodils in spring. Finally, seek out the Eden Benchmarks – a series of ten contemporary stone sculptures located at intervals along the length of the River Eden.

## Day Two: Appleby-in-Westmorland

In the middle of the Eden Valley, recharge and uncover more local history in the ancient market town of Appleby-in-Westmorland. Explore the historical sites, take in the charming architecture and browse the traditional shops as you wander along the main street of Boroughgate, flanked by glowing red sandstone buildings and lawns full of flowers in spring and summer. Stop by the Tourist Information Centre in the Moot Hall to pick up more information and enjoy some peace inside St Lawrence's Church. There are plenty of local cafes to refuel or stroll along the scenic riverside footpath to find the perfect picnic spot.



## Day Three: North Pennines National Landscape

Vast open heather moors, wonderful woodlands and tumbling waterfalls await as you dive into the stunning North Pennines National Landscape on day three of the itinerary. Enjoy a warm welcome in rural, remote communities as you discover more about the region's unique industrial heritage and natural environment. The area is also designated as a UNESCO Global Geopark, in recognition of world-class earth heritage shared through education, interpretation and visitor information.



Tranquil but challenging fell walks in this region include the dramatic High Cup Nick, Dufton Pike and Cross Fell which, at 893m is the highest point in England outside the Lake District National Park. The 268-mile Pennine Way National Trail also winds its way through this area, after starting in Edale in Derbyshire and continuing to eventually finish in Kirk Yetholm in the Scottish Borders.

For those seeking a little more adrenaline, try [abseiling with Adventure Vertical](#) or [caving with Go Cave in Nenthead](#).

## Day Three: Alston

Travel into the heart of the region with a scenic drive to the pretty village of Alston. On your way you will climb the mountain road to Hartside. Make sure you take a break at the summit viewpoint to enjoy the marvellous views over the Eden Valley, the Lake District hills and the Scottish Borders.

Standing at around 1,000 feet above sea level, Alston shares the title of England's highest market town. Enjoy a quiet afternoon exploring steeply cobbled streets, hidden courtyards and quaint shops full of local crafts. In the surrounding landscape, you'll find remnants of the regions mining past but also plenty of great views and distinctive bird and plant life.



## Places to eat and drink

Throughout your trip, be sure to sample some excellent local eateries and enjoy great service along with some tasty dishes.

The Wilding Hotel in Brough is home to a pub and restaurant offering homemade Cumbrian dishes, with fresh ingredients sourced from local farms and producers.

The [Music Room Restaurant at Augill Castle](#) offers a unique dining experience led by culinary experts in the fantastic surroundings of an 19th century castle. Book for dinner, Sunday lunch or afternoon tea.

A talented team of chefs are also ready to welcome you to the [Black Swan gastropub restaurant](#) in Ravenstonedale. Expect a locally sourced menu driven by seasonality.



## Accommodation

As well as great dining, the [Black Swan](#) in Ravenstonedale also offers 16 rooms and 3 glamping yurts, giving you the perfect reason to extend your stay. Close by you'll also find the [High Greenside Bed and Breakfast](#). [Pennine View Caravan Park](#) is family-run caravan and camp site on the edge of the Yorkshire Dales National Park, a mile from the centre of Kirkby Stephen. For something a bit different, book [The Waitby School Holiday Cottage](#) – also just outside town.

South of Kirkby Stephen you'll find luxury self-catering options at [The Lodges at Artlegarth](#) and at [The Green Cumbria](#).

The perfect blend of history, luxury and comfort awaits at the family run Wilding Hotel in Brough – a 300-year-old Coaching Inn offering local food, cosy rooms and roaring fires.

For something truly unique and special, stay at [Augill Castle](#). Rooms are individually designed with antique furnishings and luxurious fabrics, historic elegance and modern amenities.

Also in this area, the spacious and modern Keld & Brockram Barns at [Low Ploughlands](#) sleep 8 each and both include a 5-seater hot tub.

For a stay in Appleby-in-Westmorland, try the [Milburn Grange Holiday Cottages](#), and for Alston there's the [Barn End](#) and [Ghyll Burn Cottages](#).