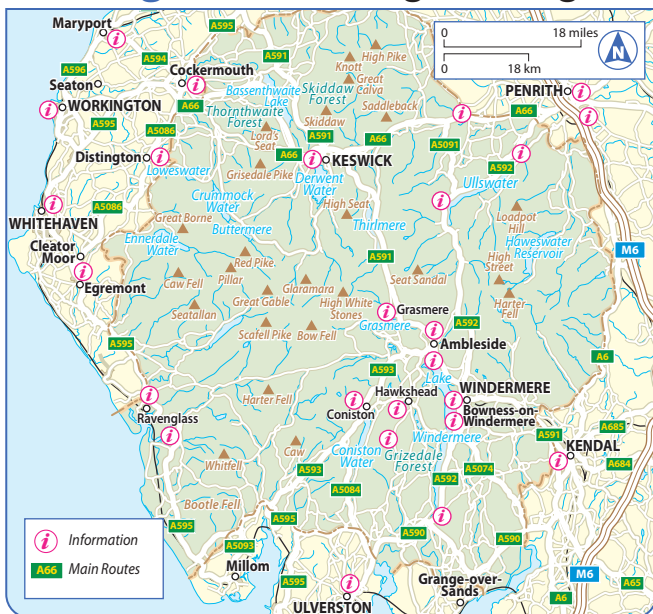


# 1

## **Strategies** for Seeing the Region



# Strategies for Seeing the Region



**T**he Lake District National Park measures just 30 miles across but within this boundary lie locations that are remote and almost inaccessible. So planning your days is as important as choosing your base, with activities and attractions to suit outdoor enthusiasts, families and couples on a romantic getaway. The pointers below are here to help you make the most of your trip.

## Rule #1. Weigh up the pros and cons of taking or hiring a car

It doesn't really need to be spelt out that a car is useful for getting to places off the beaten track. After all, it gives you the freedom to just get up and go; especially useful with a family in tow. And what better place to take your car than the country roads of the Lake District? Except when you're stuck in a queue or searching for a car parking space, and it feels like everyone else has had exactly the same idea. During

peak season, traffic queues build up throughout the Lake District's most popular areas, particularly between Bowness, Ambleside and Grasmere. This has a knock-on effect on parking. Seriously, you might have to hunt down a parking space in peak season, particularly in smaller villages where space is at a premium. Parking costs add up, so allow for that. Even in the countryside, many parking places are operated by the National Trust or Lake District National Park and will charge a fee (National Trust

members can usually park free of charge. See box below.

### **Rule #2. Check your car**

Traffic generally flows fairly swiftly along the 'A' roads around the edge of the Lake District and there are several towns en route where you can stop for fuel or refreshments. But this isn't so along some of the mountain passes (Hardknott and Wrynose, Kirkstone or Honister), where the roads are steep, winding and remote. Make sure your tyres are in good condition and that you have plenty of fuel and oil before you set off on these roads.

### **Rule #3. Consider travelling by bus or train**

Even if you have travelled to the Lake District by car, you don't need to use it the entire time you're there. A convenient bus network links the most popular towns (p 176). You can buy day or weekly tickets and hop on and off the buses without having to worry about parking. There are also mainline train services to the South Lakes, Cumbrian

coast, West Lakes and Windermere (Savvy Traveler p 169), as well as steam train trips between Lakeside and Haverthwaite (p 56), and Raven-glass and Eskdale (p 87).

### **Rule #4. Consider where you are going to stay**

I've suggested a range of accommodation options in this guide to suit different tastes. You'll find them listed at the end of each town guide and each regional guide. These include B&Bs in villages, guest houses in the country, self-catering apartments in town and cottages in the hills. There are also some luxury lakeside hotels and camping and caravanning sites by the sea, lakes and in forest parks, some with chalets and even yurts (Mongolian nomadic dwellings made from wooden frames covered in felt).

### **Rule #5. Think about the children**

Campsites tend to be more family-orientated; some hotels cater well for children but check in advance to see what facilities are provided on-site or

## **Lake District Floods**

**In November 2009, Cumbria experienced the most severe** flooding in its history. The Lake District was engulfed with raging floods following the heaviest rainfall ever recorded in Britain. Thousands were affected by the devastation, with roads and bridges closed and flood-hit communities in Cumbria cut off as the county's infrastructure was severely damaged. As well as communities, homes and businesses, important historical points of interest such as Wordsworth House in Cockermouth were also affected. Visitors to the Lake District should be aware that communities and organisations such as the National Trust have pulled together to work hard in helping each other, putting walls up, repairing paths, rebuilding their environment and connecting this beautiful landscape back to the rest of the world. This is a close-knit community and we urge you to help this wonderful region as you travel through it and be sympathetic to its people who are slowly rebuilding their lives.

nearby. See the Lake District with Kids section (p 54) and the Outdoors chapter (p 147) for attractions and activities suitable for children.

### **Rule #6. Time your visit right**

Plan your trip according to your interests. Garden enthusiasts might want to come in the spring for the carpets of daffodils and bluebells or in autumn to see the swathes of gold and brown in the trees. Some houses close in the winter so check ahead. Find out whether popular events and festivals coincide with your visit, whether or not you plan to attend. Hotels and campsites also get booked up quickly during public and school holidays, so take that into account.

### **Rule #7. Plan your fell walking and cycling carefully**

Inevitably, parts of the Lake District are remote; it is easy to misjudge a route direction, length and conditions without proper planning and foresight. If in any doubt, take a guided walk or opt for something shorter. Buy a good map (and a compass or even a GPS) and plan your route in advance. Pack a small rucksack or day bag with plenty of water, energy bars and suitable

clothing, as well as a small first-aid kit. Don't underestimate how rapidly temperatures can drop, even if it is hot at your starting point. Take layers of clothing (a base layer, a warm baselayer, a hat and a windproof/waterproof outer layer) that you can peel off or add if necessary. Make sure your footwear is supportive and comfortable enough for the length of walk you're doing. Don't go out on long walks wearing boots that you haven't worn in or you might regret it after a couple of hours. And finally, check the weather conditions before you set off.

### **Rule #8. Travel with your mobile phone**

Yes, it's a good idea to take your mobile phone and/or GPS (global positioning system) system whether walking, cycling or travelling by car. If you're stuck in the mountains, dial 999 and ask for Mountain Rescue. But be aware that you cannot always guarantee that you will have a signal. Make sure you always tell someone where you are going and what time to expect you back. If you follow other advice listed here, you will minimize any unforeseen problems. ●

## Lake District Conservation

The huge numbers of people visiting the Lake District have a serious impact on its landscape and wildlife. The National Trust and the Lake District National Park (p 156), along with charitable organizations like The Friends of the Lake District (FLD) and The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) work with the tourist industry to protect the Lakes. But as visitors, we also have a responsibility to leave the countryside and wildlife as we find it, to minimize our impact on delicate ecosystems by not picking flowers, damaging paths, woodlands and nests, closing all gates after us, and by taking all our belongings and leftovers with us when we leave.