

LAKE DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK

Your in-depth photography guide



Majestic mountains, stunning lakes and enchanting woodlands; it's no wonder the Lake District National Park is such a favourite location with outdoor photographers. **Tom Mackie** guides you to the best spots...



North

With the culturally rich town of Keswick at its centre, the northern section of the Lake District includes the dramatic peaks of Blencathra and Skiddaw, popular fells including High Pike and Cat Bells, and, of course, stunning lakes, including Bassenthwaite, Derwentwater and Ullswater. The northern area is my personal favourite as it is less touristy, tends to have better weather than the south, and contains, in my own opinion, more outstanding photographic locations.



CLASSIC LOCATIONS

1 Derwent Water/ Friar's Crag The area around Derwent Water probably has the best photographic possibilities in all of the Lake District. It has jetties, the classic wooden boats, tranquil bays with trees and mountains reflecting; the possibilities are endless. It is possible to take a nine-mile walk around Derwent Water taking in the quieter and more secluded locations that you can't reach by car. One of my favourite places is Friar's Crag situated just a short walk from the Keswick boat landings, and there is a convenient car park next to the Theatre by the

Lake. The small bay next to Friar's Crag is sheltered from any possible winds, so it's a great location to capture reflections of Cat Bells and the Scots pines on the crag. The best time to go there is in the morning to catch the first light on Cat Bells.

2 Castlerigg Stone Circle Castlerigg Stone Circle is such an iconic location of the north Lakes that it is quite common to share it with several other tripod-wielding photographers, especially in the summer and autumn months. It is located just east of Keswick,



so is convenient for those dawn shoots when the sun rises over Low and High Rigg. The best time to capture the stones is in spring and autumn when there is mist in the valley behind, which helps to separate the stones from the background. Because of its high position in the landscape surrounded by Skiddaw and Blencathra mountains to the north, Low and High Rigg to the east, Castlerigg Fells to the south and the Derwent Fells to the west, it's possible to photograph Castlerigg from any direction with a great background.

3 Ullswater The second longest lake next to Windermere, Ullswater stretches a little over seven miles across the northeast section of the park. The A592 runs the length of the lake, and there are great locations all the way along the road, in particular the boathouse at Waterfoot, the jetty at Glenridding and Aira Force waterfall, located near the junction of the A592 and A5091. There are two car parks, one on the A592 and the other on the A5091, with the later allowing a shorter walk to the waterfall. For great views over the lake, take the footpath from the lower car park up to Green Hill. Visiting in the morning offers the most attractive photo opportunities, as the sun's rays illuminate the south side of the lake, looking west.



where it is a 4½-mile walk around the lake. Autumn is a great time of year to capture the russet coloured bracken on the mountainsides. At this time the sun rises through the gap to the right side of Fleetwith Pike, providing strong side lighting to

bring out the features of the mountains, and there is often mist over the water in the mornings. In spring, the valley floor is covered with bluebells. Though Buttermere is off the main tourist routes, there is a café and a couple of hotels.

Don't miss! The sun setting over Derwent Water with the traditional wooden boats as foreground. This location is easily accessed from Keswick and faces west, so watch the sky light up just after sunset and take your Neutral Density graduated filters.

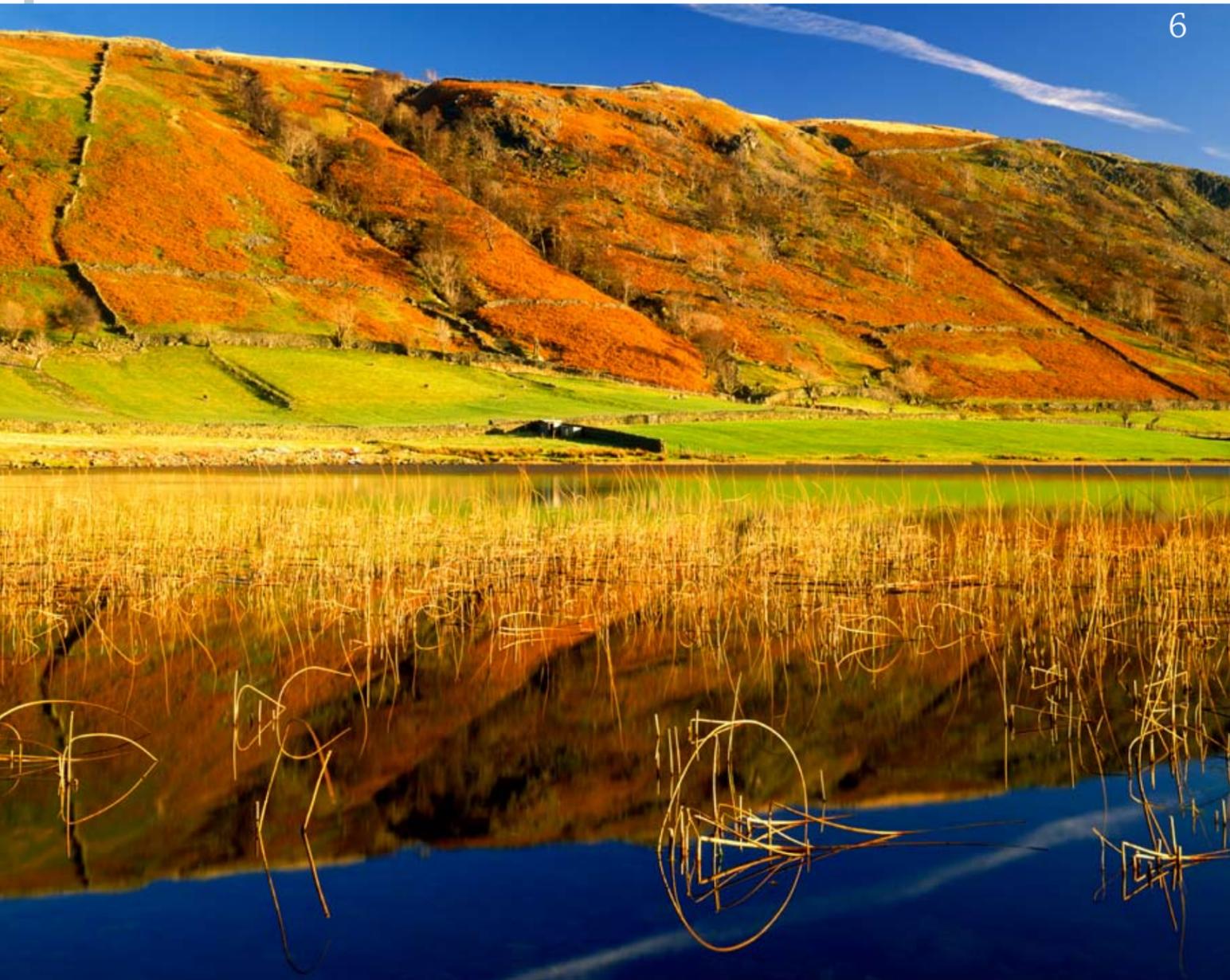


SECRET LOCATIONS

5 Borrowdale
The B5289 goes right through Borrowdale and there are plenty of nice record shots along the way, such as the double stone bridges at Grange Bay. There is also a spot just off the road across a marshy field that has a great view of the lake with Skiddaw in the background. There is even the convenient Hilton Ladore Hotel to stay in, and from their car park, the path through the marsh is just a very short distance away. Head along the boardwalk, cross over the bridge and you'll arrive at Great



Bay. This is particularly good at sunrise when Skiddaw is side-lit, bringing out the shape and form of the mountain. The grass tufts along the shoreline, which can make it tricky to walk around, make for interesting foreground detail to add depth to the image, especially in the winter when the valley and the grasses are often covered in heavy frost.



6 Watendlath Tarn
Watendlath Tarn is often overlooked by photographers as they tend to migrate to the well-know lakes like Derwent Water and Ullswater. Also, it is tucked away down a long single-track road, which helps to keep this location secluded. Take the B5289 from Keswick and turn left, heading for the much-photographed Ashness Bridge. Continue along this road until the very end where there is a small café and car park. In autumn, the bracken and grasses turn a deep golden colour, and in winter the tarn is often frozen over, providing all sorts of ice formation details. There is a good walk that goes high above the tarn and looks out over High Spy and the Buttermere Fells in the distance.



7 Walla Crag
Walla Crag is frequented more by hikers than photographers, as it requires some effort to get to - there is no convenient roadside view or car park close by. It stands 376 metres high, overlooking Keswick, Derwent Water and Bassenthwaite Lake to the west, and Blencathra to the east. The views are well worth the effort it takes to get there. To find it, take the A591 south from Keswick turning right for Castlerigg Farm. Go to the end of the small track and park alongside the road. Cross over Brockle Beck and follow the footpath alongside the stonewall to the top of Walla Crag. It's good any time of the year, especially at sunset. In autumn and spring there is a good chance of mist filling the valleys.

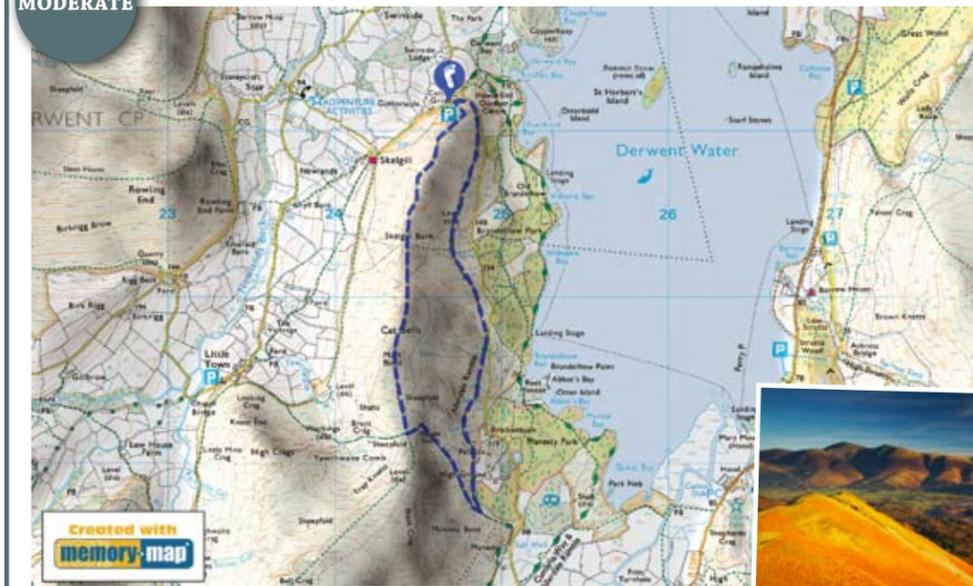


8 Hallin Fell
Some of the best kept secret locations in the Lakes are usually tucked away from the main roads and

only require a short hike; Hallin Fell is one of these. Wainwright described it as one of the best views in the Lakes. It is reached by a narrow track off the B5320 from Pooley Bridge, heading to Martindale. There is limited parking at Hallin Hawes and outside the new church. The trail to the 388-metre summit starts opposite the church. There are brilliant views over Ullswater and Martindale Common to the south. Any time of the year is good, but in winter a good covering of snow brings out the contours of the mountains.

GREAT CAMERA WALKS- 1 Cat Bells Walk

MODERATE



The hike up the ridge of Cat Bells is one of the most classic walks in the Lake District and is moderately difficult. From the top, there are great views over Derwent Water on one side and the Newlands Valley on the other. You can take the boat from Keswick to Hawes End and start at the beginning of the ridge at Guntherscale. There is parking along the roadside at Guntherscale, but this can be limited at popular times of the year. A circular hike will be around about four miles.



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South

Majestic fells and mountains and sparkling lakes define the south Lakes landscape. Glaciers that carved out the Lake District over 15,000 years ago have resulted in rugged mountains such as Scafell Pike - at 978 metres it is the highest in England. The area boasts placid lakes with stunning reflections, deciduous woodlands that are lush in the spring and full of brilliant colours in the autumn. The combination of all these features offer endless hiking trails and an abundance of photographic opportunities.

The southern section of the Lakes tends to be a bit more commercial, with its major centres such as Windermere, Bowness-on-Windermere and Ambleside. Just a short distance away are the quieter, less touristy and more dramatic areas, such as Great Langdale and Little Langdale and more remote areas, like West Water.



CLASSIC LOCATIONS

1 Coniston Water This lake is famous for Donald Campbell's ill-fated 1967 attempt to break the world water speed record. He travelled in *Bluebird* at over 300mph before somersaulting across the water. Today, Coniston Water is a more peaceful location for

photographers in search of the classic image of a jetty stretching out into a lake. There are several jetties on Coniston Water, but my favourite, because of the irregular hook, is on the north shore of Coniston. Because of its position, it is an ideal location for sunrises and



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sunsets. If you want to take images featuring mist on the water, go in the autumn or spring, when the difference in temperature between the water and air is often sufficient to create the phenomenon.

2 Great Langdale One of the most dramatic valleys in the Lake District, Great Langdale is dominated by the Langdale Pikes, which reach a height of 709 metres. Because of its east/west orientation, it is perfect for creating side-lit images that bring out the contours and details of the

landscape. The B5343 runs the length of the valley, but you will want to leave the car at one of several car parks and explore the valley on foot. There are many stonewalls, trees and becks to use as foreground elements, with the majestic mountains in the background. Any time of year is great for this location, as it truly has a four-season appeal.

3 Windermere Anyone who has been to the Lake District will invariably have been to Windermere. It is the longest and largest lake in the park, and



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the most visited, but there are quiet places around the lake. At the top end is Waterhead where William Wordsworth probably got his inspiration for his poem *Daffodils*. If you go to the west shore you will find it far removed from the hustle and bustle that you find around the tourist centres of Windermere and Bowness. There are quite a few walks on this side, and great views to the east, so it makes it a perfect location for getting photographs of sunrises. As with any location, if you get here early enough, then you are likely to find even the normally busy spots can be had to yourself.

4 Bea Tarn Located in between Great Langdale and Little Langdale, this small tarn is easy to get to, with a car park just opposite. It benefits from having the Langdale Pikes as a backdrop to the north and Blake Rigg to the west. In spring, the wood on the west side is covered in rhododendrons in bloom, and in the autumn the whole area around the lake comes alive with warm golden tones when the bracken changes colour. In winter, the tarn is often frozen with patterns in the ice. Best times for photography are first light and late afternoon when the Pikes are still lit and there is a good chance of no wind, resulting in still conditions and stunning reflections.



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SECRET LOCATIONS

5 Cathedral Cave When it's raining outside, as it often does in the Lake District (hey, how do you think they get all of these lakes?), I go into one of the lesser known caves in the area. Now, you probably wouldn't think about making pictures in a cave, but Cathedral Cave has some very impressive features to photograph, including a massive column of rock with a reflective pool of

water. Everyone knows about Rydal Cave, as it's on the popular Loughrigg Fell walk, but Cathedral Cave is hidden in a disused slate quarry next to Greenburn Beck in Little Langdale. It can be reached via a short walk from The Three Shires pub down a small track; cross the footbridge over Greenburn Beck, walk upstream until you see a gate and stile on your left. A short walk on from

here you will see the entrance to the cave itself.

6 Eltermere If you are looking for a place to stay with its own private lake, then try the Eltermere Country House Hotel in Elterwater. I used to use it as a base for my workshops. It is only a short walk from the front door to this tranquil secret spot. There is a small jetty leading into the mere that makes a great subject at sunrise, as it faces east. It's great at anytime of the year, but



if you want a bit of atmosphere with mist over the water then try in the autumn when the sun rises directly opposite the jetty. It is also a good spot in winter,



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when the grasses around the edge of the mere get covered in frost, adding an interesting foreground feature.

7 Little Langdale On a smaller scale to Great Langdale, the features of this Lakeland valley are more intimate. One of my favourite areas in Little Langdale is Fell Foot, near the base of Wrynose Pass. There there is a single tree on a mound, with Fell Foot Farm in the background. It's very easy to drive past it, as you will be navigating a very narrow

road trying to avoid the stone walls! There are a few places to park along the road just after the cattle grid. The whole area is full of photographic potential and is best discovered on foot because of the lack of parking. After taking in other features, such as Little Langdale Tarn, there is a great pub, called The Threshires, to get a bite to eat.

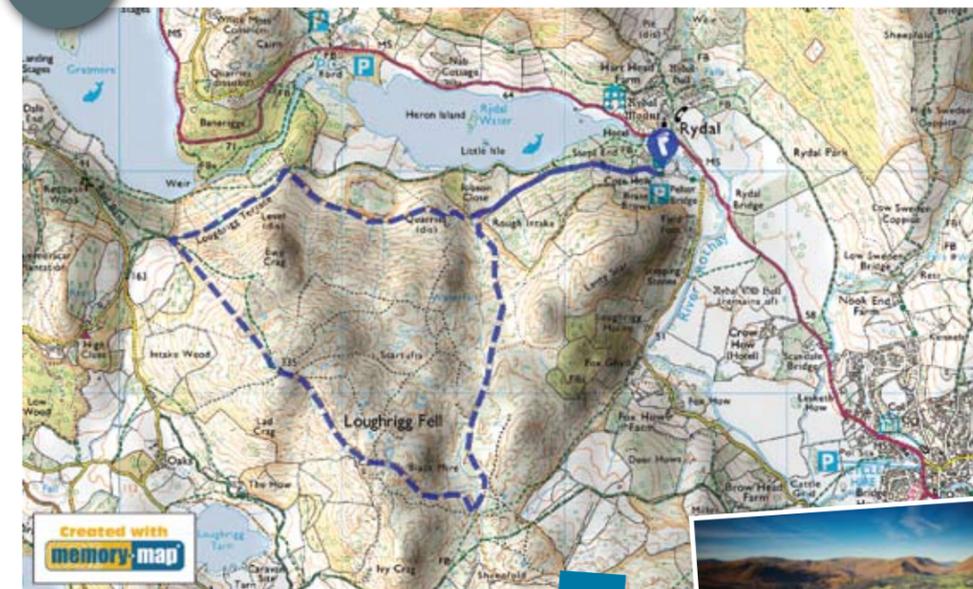
8 Swinside Stone Circle Everyone is very familiar with the iconic Castlerigg Stone Circle, but few photographers know about the Swinside Stone Circle. This is probably because it is located in a remote southwest edge of the national park on a private farm. One of the best features of this circle is the rise in the landscape

next to it. This allows a high viewpoint from which to capture the shape of the circle without merging the stones upon one another. It's located off the A595, on a minor road which dead ends at Swinside Farm. Although the circle is located on private ground, it can easily be viewed from a nearby public footpath.

Don't miss! Stock Ghyll Force is a waterfall that is often overlooked, as it is tucked away behind Ambleside. Follow the sign posted 'To waterfalls' between the old market place and bank.



MODERATE GREAT CAMERA WALKS 2 Loughrigg Fell



Routes created using Memory-Map Explorer Lake District 1:25,000 Contact 0844 811 0950 www.memory-map.co.uk

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The is one of the classic walks in the Lake District, which takes in Rydal Cave, views about Rydal Water, Loughrigg Terrace and finally ending at the summit of Loughrigg Fell before heading back to the start. It is about four miles long with an ascent of 273 metres. There is so much to photograph along the way, but the views from the top of Loughrigg Fell are stunning with Grasmere to the north, Rydal to the east, Windermere to the south and the Elterwater Valley to the west. Start at the car park at Pelter Bridge just off the A591 and walk to the end of the lane until you go through the stile. Follow the trail to Rydal Cave then around Loughrigg Terrace then up to the summit of Loughrigg Fell before descending to rejoin the path on the shore of Rydal Water and back to the car park.



TRIP ESSENTIALS

GUIDE TO THE SEASONS

Spring The woodlands throughout the Lakes are filled with snowdrops, daffodils and bluebells. Daffodils are everywhere in the lakes, but especially around the shores of Ullswater. Bluebells can be found in the Buttermere Valley, Rannerdale and Low Wood, by Wast Water.

Summer The crowds are heavy at this time of year, but quiet meadows full of buttercups can be found, such as in St. John's in the Vale, near Keswick. In August, the fells are awash with purple heather in bloom.

Autumn The autumn hues of russet,

yellow and gold come alive at this time of year. Particular good spots for colour are Clappersgate along the River Brathay, the Great Wood, near Derwent Water, and around Stock Ghyll.

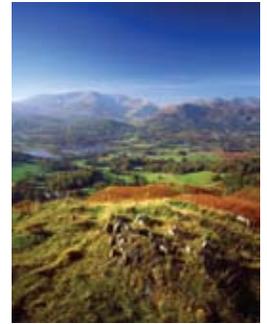


Winter Snow-capped mountains are a brilliant backdrop to Lakeland scenes in the wintertime. When the temperatures drop below zero head for the water's edge to capture ice covered grasses and, if you are lucky, a hoar frost.

GREAT DRIVING ROUTES

The Langdales

Start in Ambleside taking the A593 route through Clappersgate. At Skelwith Bridge, turn right on to the B5343. About 100 yards on the left you will come across Skelwith Force waterfall.



Continue through Elterwater and Chapel Stile until you come into Great Langdale, where there are great views all along the way of the Langdale Pikes. At the end of the valley take the single-track road up the pass, stopping at Blea Tarn, then the road will descend into Little Langdale, which is on a much smaller scale. Follow this road back to Skelwith Bridge and then back along the B5343 to Ambleside.

Buttermere and Borrowdale Valleys

This drive takes in two beautiful valleys and two high mountain passes. Leave Keswick on the A66 and then turn left, signposted to Portinscale. Follow this road to Swinside and then into the Newlands Valley. There are brilliant views up the valley from alongside the road. You then come to the top of the pass where there is a nice waterfall on the left side. The road descends into the Buttermere Valley. Turn left at the church and follow the road along Buttermere where it will begin to climb over the Honister Pass. There are superb views from the pass then the road winds its way down into Borrowdale and finally back to Keswick.



SHORT VISIT SHOOT LISTS



One-day visit Capture the sunrise at Castlerigg Stone Circle. Have breakfast at the café next to the main car park in Keswick then work off the breakfast by starting out with an easy hike around Latrigg Fell for brilliant views over Derwent Water, then finish up the session with a more difficult hike up Cat Bells for views into the Newlands Valley and over Derwent Water. Then drive into Borrowdale and up to Ashness Bridge for a classic view. End the day by walking down to Friar's Crag and, if the light is good, finish up the day by photographing the sunset at the Keswick boat launch.

Weekend Visit Day One: Dawn on the west shore of Ullswater followed by breakfast in Glenridding. Drive along the lake to Aira Force and hike in to photograph the waterfall. Continue along the lake eastwards to Pooley Bridge then around the other side to Hallin Fell for views over the lake. Grab some lunch in Pooley Bridge. Travel back around the lake and over the Kirkstone Pass into Ambleside and out to Elterwater for sunset.



Day two: Start on the west shore of Windermere for sunrise then up to Hawkshead for breakfast. Walk around the lakes at Tarn Hows then over to Wray Castle for pictures of this impressive castle. Lunch at the Drunken Duck Inn at Barn gates. After that, head down to Coniston Water for a sunset to finish off the weekend.



USEFUL INFO

BUSES AND TRAINS Train and bus information can be found at: www.golakes.co.uk/information/getting-around-cumbria.aspx and www.golakes.co.uk/information/cumbria-by-rail.aspx

ORDNANCE SURVEY MAPS Landranger (1:50,000): 89, 90, 96, 97; Explorer series (1:25,000): 4, 5, 6, 7. >> ordnancesurvey.co.uk

MEMORY MAP - V5 Lake District OS Explorer 1:25,000. >> www.memory-map.co.uk You can download the route maps, including GPS waypoints, for the two walks featured from Memory Map's TrailZilla website: www.trailzilla.com.

ACCOMMODATION There is a good variety of B&B's, guesthouse's and hotels throughout the Lake District. Here is a link for a concise guide: www.lakedistrict-stay.co.uk

EATING There are many very good places to eat in the Lakes; here are several restaurants that are very good value for money: Rembrandt's, Keswick, A Different Taste, Keswick, The Loose Box Pizzeria, Keswick, The Drunken Duck Inn, Barn gates, which also has award-winning beverages.

USEFUL WEBSITES

>> www.lakedistrict.gov.uk

>> www.metoffice.gov.uk/louddoor/