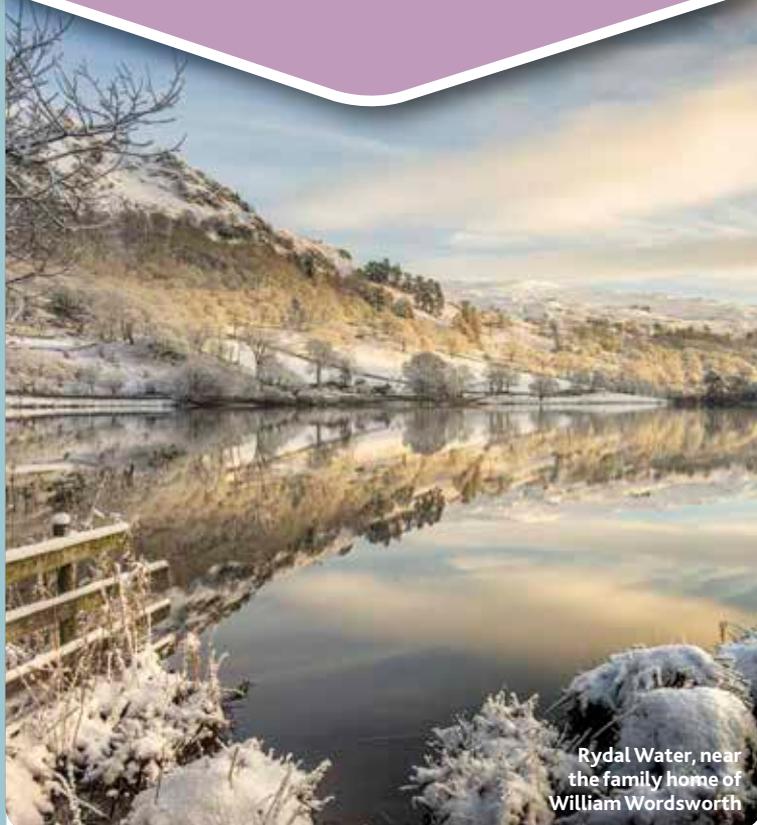


Winter in the Lake District



Rydal Water, near the family home of William Wordsworth

Full of crisp, frosty fell walks, hearty dinner spots and cosy pubs with crackling fires, the Lake District is the place for a bracing, British winter retreat. Use this list to plan out a perfect seasonal holiday.

👁️ SIGHTS Brantwood

(brantwood.org.uk; Coniston)
The great 19th-century thinker John Ruskin bought this lakeside house and spent 20 years altering it, championing handmade crafts (he even designed the wallpaper). Look out for his vast shell collection. Highlights include the grand but cosy drawing room, the tome-filled study and the tiny upstairs bedroom decorated with some of his favourite watercolours. Outside the house, 100 hectares of gardens and terraces stretch up the fellside.

Hill Top

(nationaltrust.org.uk/hill-top; Hawkshead)

Two miles south of Hawkshead, in the tiny village of Near Sawrey, this idyllic farmhouse was

purchased in 1905 by Beatrix Potter and used as the inspiration for many of her tales: the house features directly in *Samuel Whiskers*, *Tom Kitten*, *Pigling Bland* and *Jemima Puddle-Duck*, among others, and you might recognise the kitchen garden from *Peter Rabbit*. The house reopens in mid-February, and until then you can visit the gardens and shop (Fri–Sun).

Honister Slate Mine

(honister.com; Borrowdale)
This old slate mine has been reinvented as a centre for all kinds of activities: you can venture underground into the bowels of the old Edge and Kimberley mines, or tackle an underground via ferrata, climbing along a system of fixed cables, tracing the route of the old slate miners.

Rydal Mount

(rydalmount.co.uk; Ambleside)
The poet William Wordsworth's most famous residence in the Lake District is undoubtedly Dove Cottage, but he actually spent more time at Rydal Mount, 1.5 miles northwest from Ambleside, off the A591. This was the Wordsworth family's home from 1813 until the poet's death in 1850, and the house contains a great deal of Wordsworth memorabilia. You can visit by arrangement in December and February.

🔥 ACTIVITIES

Helm Crag Walk

(walklakes.co.uk/walk_77.html; Grasmere)

If you only do one winter walk in Grasmere, make it Helm Crag. Sometimes referred to as 'the Lion and the Lamb', for the twin crags atop its summit, it's a rewarding two-hour climb, dauntingly steep in places, with around 335m of elevation gain.

Wrynose and Hardknott Passes

(visitcumbria.com; Little Langdale & Eskdale)

Tackle an infamous mountain road traversing England's two highest drivable passes: Wrynose and Hardknott. Sometimes reaching a gradient of one in three, it's single-carriage and there are few passing places. Before you set out, top up the oil and radiator, as you'll mostly be in first or second gear.

🍷 EATING

Drunken Duck

PUB FOOD £
(drunkenduckinn.co.uk; Bargates)

Long one of the Lakes' premier dining destinations, the Drunken Duck blends historic pub and fine-dining restaurant. On a wooded crossroads on the top of Hawkshead Hill, it's renowned for its luxurious food and home-brewed ales, and the flagstones and sporting prints conjure a convincing country atmosphere. Book well ahead for dinner.

Great North Pie

PIES £
(greatnorthpie.co; Unit 2 The Courtyard, Rothay Rd, Ambleside)
Based in Cheshire, this much-garlanded pie maker has opened an Ambleside outlet, and it's

rightly become a town favourite. Go for a classic such as Swaledale beef mince or Lancashire cheese and onion, or opt for something on the seasonal pie menu: they're all delicious, and served with lashings of mash and gravy (veggie, should you wish).

Kirkstile Inn

PUB FOOD £
(kirkstile.com; Loweswater)
A finer country pub you could not hope to find – crackling fires, oak beams, worn carpets, wooden bar and all. It's particularly known for its award-winning ales.

🍷 DRINKING

Crafty Baa

(thecraftybaa.business.site; 21 Victoria St, Windermere)
The craft-beer revolution comes to the lakes, with an ample supply of brews: Czech pilsner, Weissbier, smoked lagers, even mango and gooseberry beers.

Dog & Gun

(01768 773463; 2 Lake Rd, Keswick)
Benches, beams, hearths, rugs: the old Dog is the picture of a Lakeland pub. Have a Rescue ale, which donates proceeds to the Keswick Mountain Rescue Team.

Good to know

Hunkering above Coniston like a benevolent giant, the **Old Man of Coniston** (803m) presents an irresistible challenge. The most popular route is up the east side along the Coppermines Valley – a leg-sappingly steep slog, but you'll be rewarded with the views from the top. Along the way you'll pass the remains of several slate and copper mines. This is a true winter adventure for those who come prepared.



WINTER IN THE LAKE DISTRICT



TOP PICKS

MAP KEY

📍 SIGHTS

1 Brantwood

2 Hill Top

3 Honister Slate Mine

4 Rydal Mount

🏔️ ACTIVITIES

5 Helm Crag

6 Wrynose & Hardknott

Passes

🍴 EATING

7 Drunken Duck

8 Great North Pie

9 Kirkstile Inn

🍷 DRINKING

10 Crafty Baa

11 Dog & Gun

🛏️ SLEEPING

12 Eltermere Inn

13 Langstrath Inn

14 Rooms at the Apple Pie

🛏️ Sleeping

£ Rooms at the Apple Pie

Best for a family-friendly B&B (applepieambleside.co.uk; Rydal Rd, Ambleside)

Not content with making the best apple pie in town, the eponymous café has expanded into a separate accommodation building next door. There are eight supremely good-value rooms, plainly furnished and on the small side, perhaps, but thoroughly comfy. The top-floor loft rooms share a landing, so are ideal for those with young children.

££ Langstrath Inn

Best for a cosy winter hideout (thelangstrath.com; Stonethwaite)

A simple country inn that's one of the best little stays in the Borrowdale Valley. Its eight rooms are snug and simple, with the occasional roof beam to add character, but it's the views that really sell the place. Hearty food and ales are served in the restaurant, and it's an ideal base for attempting England's highest peak, Scafell Pike.

£££ Eltermere Inn

Best for gorgeous surroundings (eltermere.co.uk; Elterwater)

This charming inn is one of the Lakeland's loveliest backwater boltholes. Rooms are simple and classic, tastefully decorated in fawns and taupes, with quirky features such as window seats and free-standing baths. The food's excellent, served in the inn's snug bar. Afternoon tea is available, too, if you're back for it. All the rooms have great views over the Northern Fells.



FURTHER READING

Our *England* guide has a section on the Lake District & Cumbria (£17.99), or download it as an eBook (£12.59) or separate chapters (£2.99 each).