

Beginners Navigation Skills in the Northern Lake District

Trip style: Small group holidays

Destination: 📍 Lake District

Trip code: DBK03-NVB01

Carbon Footprint: 🌱 48kg CO2



HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

There's an art to navigating the outdoors that goes beyond mastering a GPS tracking device and loading a smartphone app. The National Navigation Award Scheme (NNAS) Bronze Navigator Award is designed for beginners who are seeking to improve their navigation skills and build confidence in the outdoors. Upon successful completion of the course, you'll be able to plan and follow your own countryside walks, with a good understanding of safety, weather, kit and judgement of time and distance. This holiday is suitable for anyone and no previous experience of navigating with a map and compass is required.

WHAT YOU'LL LOVE

- Having the chance to complete the NNAS Bronze Navigator Award
- Learning basic navigation skills through practical indoor and outdoor exercises
- The expertise of a knowledgeable and experienced tutor
- Staying at Derwent Bank, our country house near Keswick
- A more personalised experience thanks to small group sizes (maximum 8 people to 1 leader)

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Comfortable en-suite accommodation in our country house
- Cream tea on arrival day
- Cooked or continental breakfast every morning
- Daily packed lunches
- Three-course evening meals, plus tea & coffee
- Registration with the NNAS

TRIP SUITABILITY

While these aren't walking holidays as such, it's essential that you have a level of fitness that will allow you to enjoy your experience to the fullest. Please prepare to be on your feet and outdoors for most of the day (usually 6-7hrs). You will cover anything up to 5 miles over the course of a day.

ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrival Day

Check-in at the hotel is available from 16:00. If you are a member you can arrive at the house from 14:00 in 2026. Enjoy a complimentary cream tea at 16:30 and meet other guests. After tea meet your leader and have a course introduction.

Day 2-3: Navigation Days

Our days will be spent working through a range of practical indoor and outdoor exercises that will help us cover the Bronze Navigator Award Syllabus: Navigate using a variety of maps and scales. Use 4 and 6 figure grid references with worded descriptions to define the position of a map feature and to locate a feature on the ground. Orientate the map using handrails, obvious point features and major landforms. Use linear features (e.g. paths, tracks, clear boundaries) as handrails in simple navigation exercises. Relate prominent landforms such as large hills and valleys to corresponding contour information on the map. Orientate the map by aligning a compass needle against grid north and be aware that magnetic variation causes an inaccuracy. Use an orientated map to confirm the direction of travel. Use clearly identifiable features to confirm position along the route and to recognise when the target has been overshoot. Measure horizontal distance on the map and estimate distance on the ground using timing, pacing and simple visual judgements e.g. 100m. Plan and implement simple routes and navigation strategies based on the above skills. Recognise a navigation error within a few minutes and apply simple relocation techniques using handrails and prominent features. Be aware of the use of mobile phone location apps as a back up to map and compass and in emergencies. Demonstrate an awareness of local and national access issues, access legislation, personal responsibilities, the Countryside Code and sustainability. Demonstrate appropriate knowledge of walking equipment, safety equipment and emergency procedures. If you would like more information about what you will learn on a Bronze course please read these Participant Notes. You will be outside for parts of the course and there will be some standing around outside so please bring warm clothing with you. You can expect to walk between 2 to 4 miles each day. The course includes map work exercises and walk planning in the evenings. Maps will be provided for use during the course, if you have a compass please bring one with you to help with orientating the map.

Day 4: Departure Day

Enjoy a leisurely breakfast before making your way home.

Derwent Bank

Adored by poets, painters, and literary giants for centuries, the Lake District has always had an irresistible pull. It's no surprise, then, that this country house near the market town of Keswick holds such appeal, not least for its setting in lovely grounds that slope down to the shores of Derwentwater. The location couldn't be more perfect; to the west is Cat Bells, to the east is Keswick, Walla Crag, and Latrigg, and to the south is the entrance to the Borrowdale valley. There's a wealth of big-name attractions within easy travelling distance, including Blencathra, Helvellyn, and Ullswater. Also visit-worthy for walkers is Scafell Pike for its well-trodden routes and trails and the 73-mile-long Cumbria Way for its mist-shrouded peaks, glacial valleys, and many excuses for pit-stops and picnics.

A warm welcome

We want you to feel comfortable from the moment you arrive. You'll find a welcome pack in your room with guest registration forms, menus, order forms for dinners and picnic lunches, the Wi-Fi password, and the front door code. Our houses are locked at night, so we recommend noting the Duty Manager's number on arrival in case of an emergency (or getting locked out).

Evening entertainment

While evening entertainment varies from house to house, HF Holidays Inter-House Quiz night held after dinner on Wednesdays is a weekly staple. Your HF Holidays leader may be around for tips on guided and self-guided walking routes as well as visit-worthy local attractions.

Walks talks

Our HF Holidays walk leaders host guided walking information briefings before dinner on guided walking holiday arrival days. This is followed by a group Walks Talk for information on the following day's guided walks (held before dinner every evening). Self-guided walking guests are, of course, welcome.

The walking day

Prior to setting off on guided walks, your HF Holidays Leader will run you through a short safety briefing. There's also an up-to-date weather forecast on display at the house to ensure you have appropriate clothing and footwear. If you choose to do your own walks or are on a self-guided walking holiday, we ask that you please complete an Independent Walker Card each day. These can be found near the Discovery Point in the house.