

Ullswater Lake Moderate Challenge Trail

Route Summary

This is a fantastic and lovely trip, starting from almost the heart of the Lake District, with the peak of Helvellyn rearing up on the west side. The scenery is great, with mountains on both sides, and high hills, and the Kirkstone Pass to the south.

Penrith, just off the M6, is only 5 miles away from the north end of the lake; Keswick, a major centre for the north Lakes lies to the north-west, and Ambleside is 10 miles to the south. The lake is subject to the effect of winds, usually from the south or south-west.

As with all large lakes, the wind on Ullswater can whip up waves very quickly. The prevailing wind is from the south-west, and usually (but not always) blows up the lake from Glenridding. This means that the 'fetch', i.e. the length of waves, and therefore their height, can be quite awe-inspiring when the northern end of the lake is reached. The paddler, if the wind gets up unexpectedly, can at least creep back hugging the shore, and especially if keeping to the west bank, avoid the worst of waves head-on.

Nearest Town – Ambleside or Penrith

O.S. Sheets - Landranger No. 90 – Penrith, Keswick and Ambleside

Start - Glenridding, south end of Ullswater – NY 390169

Finish – Same

Waterways Travelled – Ullswater Lake

Type of Water - Large lake with care required if windy

Distance – 3 miles (can be extended, by paddling further north)

Licence Information – None required, public access

Local Facilities – In Glenridding, (cafes, hotels and public toilets), Ambleside and Penrith

Vehicle Shuttle Required - No

Portages and Locks - None

Description

On leaving the steamer pier area (the steamers, well worth using, take passengers up and down the whole lake all day in the summer), one has to take care to avoid any steamers on the water, and the dinghies from the sailing club on the spit just after the steamer pier. This area is always busy, for obvious reasons – everyone wants to use a boat here!

We have taken great care to ensure the currency, accuracy and reliability of this information. We cannot accept responsibility for errors or omissions but where such are brought to our attention, the information will be amended accordingly. Users should be aware that environmental conditions outside of our control can change the nature of the Trail within a short space of time. It is recommended that weather and water conditions are checked beforehand, and tide timetables where applicable.

It is worth taking time to work out what the weather is doing – even in high summer, squalls come down from the hills very quickly, and if the day is windy, the paddler does not want to be blown too far out into the lake.

On leaving Glenridding, the small island of Wall Holm is just ahead (300 yds), and Norfolk Island is visible in the distance, about 1,000 yds away. A good trip is to round Norfolk Island, and maybe land on it, as it feels like a real destination!

If more energetic, a parking area on the road on the left-hand side could be reached, or even Aira Point, an obvious pit of land on the left side. On following a track up to the road, and crossing it, the car park and café are reached at Aira Force, a famous waterfall.

It is possible in a day to paddle to Howtown on the right bank, and back, landing on a beach to the right side of the steamer pier. Please note that there is no car parking at Howtown if wishing to leave a vehicle there. Further north, there is much sailing at weekends around Ullswater Yacht Club, and the water can become very congested.

Useful Information

The route is circular and can be done in either direction depending on wind, be mindful that this is an open stretch of water and the wind can have a real bearing on time and ability to paddle..

Ullswater is the main attraction in the north-east Lakes, near to Penrith, and not far from Keswick and Derwentwater. The drive to Ambleside and Windermere to the south is over the Kirkstone Pass, with spectacular views. Many mountains are nearby for walking, Helvellyn being the most obvious. Visitor centre at Glenridding.

www.ullswater.com/

www.ullswater.co.uk/

www.ullswater/hotels.html

www.ullswater.co.uk/activities-on-the-lake

www.ullswater-steamers.co.uk/

Recommended Next Trail

If you have enjoyed this trail why not try out one of the many trails available.

Safety Information

Spending an afternoon canoeing can be a fun way to experience nature, get a great workout and spend time with family and friends. However, it can also be a dangerous journey, if safety guidelines are overlooked. Always follow these basic rules and comply with navigation rules- keep to the right of on-coming boats. Please be careful at points along the trail where there are sharp bends on the waterway and keep a look out at these points for oncoming traffic.

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Wear appropriate clothing

Always wear shoes. Rocks, rough terrain and river beds present serious hazards to boaters without the proper attire. Nearly 90per cent of all boating injuries are attributed to lack of proper footwear. Other canoe safe clothing includes hats, additional dry clothing towels, and layered items which can easily be removed.

Be sure to

- Know the weather forecast before you set out canoeing.
 - Familiarise yourself with the local area, it's sensitive places and protected areas.
 - Leave the environment as you found it. Please read [You, Your Canoe and the environment](#)
 - Take your litter home with you.
 - Follow the navigation rules for the waterway you are on.
 - Keep noise to a minimum.
 - Do not damage bank side vegetation when launching or landing. (No Seal Launching)
 - Where possible keep to any designated paths or launching points.
 - Canoe a safe distance away from wildlife.
 - Check your equipment.
 - Observe the navigation rules for this waterway.
 - Check to see if there are any events on the waterways when you wish to travel.
- Use the checklist below to make sure you have everything you need.

Checklist:

1. Boat
2. Paddle
3. Buoyancy Aid
4. Bailer/sponge
5. Small First Aid Kit
6. Penknife
7. Mobile telephone (in a waterproof bag....Please note that in some areas due to the location mobile telephone reception might be nonexistent)
8. Fresh drinking water
9. Sun cream, hat and sunglasses
10. Light waterproof jacket
11. Footwear
12. Licence

ALWAYS be certain to let others know where you're going and when you're expected to return.

Specific Environmental Information:

Please ensure you don't remove or damage any plants or animals from the waterway as they may be protected or harmful if transferred to other catchments.

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Canoeists and kayakers take very seriously environmental concerns and already follow existing voluntary environmental codes of conduct, including Canoe England's own guidance notes outlined in the "You your canoe and the environment" publication.

By following the simple steps below you can ensure your presence is not detrimental to the freshwater environment, minimize and avoid accidentally disturbing wildlife and their habitats.

- Find out about the area before you go, noting its sensitive places, species and breeding seasons.
- Leave no trace of your visit and take your litter home with you.
- When clearing litter left by others, handle it with care.
- Leave the environment as you find it
- Keep noise to a minimum.
- Do not "seal" launch or drag boats to avoid wearing away natural banks. Float your canoe for launching, lift out when landing and carry it to and from the water.
- Do not damage bank side vegetation when launching or landing.
- Where possible keep to any designated paths or launching points.
- On rivers, avoid paddling over gravel banks in low water conditions – they may contain fish spawn.
- Constantly assess wildlife. If you see signs of disturbance move away quietly.

Be the eyes and ears on the water. Report pollution, wildlife problems, damage, incidents etc to the relevant authorities.

Canal & River Trust - Emergencies- Telephone 0800 47 999 47

RSPCA for wildlife and animals in distress – Telephone 0990 55 59 99 (24 hours)

Environment Agency - Telephone 0800 80 70 60 (24 hours)

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