

England

Information about the English Lake District



Photo by Steve Barber - Mintfest International Street Theatre Festival in Kendal - www.cumbriaphoto.co.uk

To walk in the English Lake District in Spring and Autumn is one of life's great pleasures. This corner of north west England, the old counties of Westmorland and Cumberland just South of Carlisle and the Scottish border and north of Lancaster is one the most beautiful and distinctive landscapes in the world. It is idyllic walking country, the mountains, though not particularly high or rugged, are of great character and have legendary and evocative names such as High Street, Haystacks, Coniston Old Man to name but three.

In the main valleys are the old towns and villages that were once the economic and social centres of the pastoral farming communities. Many pubs retain their old character; the walls bedecked with the memories of the local pastimes of fox hunting, hound trails and fell running. In the dales are the ancient farmsteads built to withstand the rigours of winter and the onslaught of marauding bands from the north in bygone centuries. Many of the place names come from the language of the Norse settlers of the 9th Century.

The valleys are occupied by the long lakes that give the area its name. In the hills are innumerable smaller lakes and tarns a web of ancient footpaths drovers roads, bridal ways and Roman roads join everything together for the walker to explore. Every step is a delight; it's small wonder that the Lake District inspired the work of one of England's most famous poets, William Wordsworth, who with his family now lies in the churchyard beside the river in the centre of the exquisite village of Grasmere considered by the poet to be "The loveliest spot that man hath ever found".

If Wordsworth and the Romantic poets were inspired by the lakes and fells, Beatrix Potter, in her writings from her home in the Lake District, reflects a relationship with animals and nature that is whimsical and quintessentially of the English countryside and of the Lake District.

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