



UK - Lakeland Epic

INTRODUCTION

The Lake District is England's largest national park and home to some of the most spectacular biking, not only in the UK but certainly in the World. The variety of terrain, from stone and slate to exposed rock, makes for thrilling riding and real challenge as we complete our journey.

HIGHLIGHTS

- 5 full days of point-to-point riding
- Awesome trails which ride well in all conditions
- Bags are moved between guesthouses
- Great country guesthouses

OUR LAKES MTB EXPERTS

Every CycleActive tour is led by an SMBLA qualified, highly experienced CycleActive guide from the UK. Your guide will be qualified through this award, so they'll know the trails, the environment and the best ways to ensure that everyone has an enjoyable and safe journey.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT HOLIDAY

At CycleActive we carefully grade our trips according to both the level of fitness you need and, for mountain biking, the level of skill you need. We also offer personal advice to anyone who needs it, by email or on the phone, to ensure that you find a holiday suitable for your abilities and desires.

Fitness grade 3. As this tour involves a lot of climbs and technical descents a good level of fitness is required. Full days are spent on the bikes meaning there is a need for endurance.

Skill grade C. Much of this trip is spent cycling challenging trails, technical climbs and rocky descents, which requires a good level of skill. There are many different types of terrain on the tour, so you need good, confident bike handling skills.

SUMMARY ITINERARY

Day 1 (Sunday). Arrive in Penrith, Meet with your guide and the rest of the group. Briefing then dinner at a local pub in the evening.

Day 2. Across the High Street Fells to Ambleside, taking in the stunning Lake Ullswater.

Day 3 Through the central lakes, skirting Coniston on the way to the Duddon Valley.

Day 4. Riding west and north over high passes and remote country to the furthest corners of the national Park.

Day 5. Lakes and passes galore as you cross into the Borrowdale valley and ride north towards Keswick.

Day 6. A thrilling final day as you ride the best of the North Lakes back to Penrith

Day 7 (Saturday). After a relaxed breakfast you are ready to head home.

Full details of dates, prices and what is included can be found on our website.



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Detail Itinerary

Arrival (day 1)

The tour starts on Sunday in Penrith, which is in the north-eastern corner of The Lake District, and can easily be reached by road (M6 jn 40), rail (Virgin West Coast main line) and air (Manchester Airport, then a train direct from the airport). You can arrive at any time today to get settled in to our lovely guesthouse, get your bike and gear sorted out, and maybe even take a warm up spin through some of the backroads of the Eden Valley. In the evening your guide will arrive to give you a briefing on the trip ahead, and to start his guiding duties by leading you to the best pub for dinner!

Ullswater and High Street (day 2)

Riding from the door of our guesthouse we cut through some little known trails to get onto Barton Fell, overlooking Ullswater, the second largest (and many say most beautiful) lake in the National Park. As we spin down the first great descent, a mix of rocks, grass, gravel and some skinny singletrack too, you'll quickly get a flavour for the terrain and scenery that's in store for you.

Our destination for today is Ambleside, which means we have some big hills to cross while you still have fresh legs! The route can vary depending on the group and the weather (that's why we have professional and experienced guides) but our favourite is to take in classics like High Street, Boredale and Jenkins Crag to make for a really exhilarating first day on the bikes. Tonight we stay at our favourite Ambleside guesthouse, well known by our many weekend guests. The owner is a keen biker and has a great workshop setup; His wife also makes a mean bit of cake, so we'll have something tasty with our tea when we arrive. Then you've got time for a shower before we walk into town to sample some good, well earned pub food.

Into the Duddon Valley (day 3)

Today we blaze through some of the best trails in the central lakes, never going too high or crossing any major passes. It's still quite a challenging day, with loads of singletrack and rocky doubletrack.

Even though we don't go high, we find some classic Lakeland scenery - from the outstanding first climb above Grasmere to our last trail across the Dunnerdale Fells, with panoramic views of lakes, sea and mountains. Just as breathtaking is the final descent, as we blast down into one of the most remote valleys in the south-western Lakes, for a night at a great guesthouse that is, of course, next door to the pub!

The Wild West (day 4)

This next leg of our journey is hard to describe in words, to capture the feeling of adventure, exploration and remoteness that makes this kind of biking so special. The panorama above was taken on our recce trip, on the afternoon of this ride, looking across at Illgill Head and up towards the mighty Sca Fell. Once we get out here, behind the really big mountains, encounters with other bikers or walkers become very rare.

The riding today is mostly on wider tracks, with some steep singletrack, walking sections, quiet backroads and great valley trails to blast along too, including plenty of water crossings! We're certain it'll be one of the best big mountain days you'll ever do on a bike, and to finish at a great little country hotel adds the touch of comfort that you deserve after a big day out.



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Two Passes and Four Lakes (day 5)

Today we enjoy more of the western lakes trails, as we skirt northwards past Ennerdale Water to Crummock Water, Buttermere and finally Derwent Water. Surrounding every lake you'll see a different landscape, from craggy peaks above sheer walls of rock, to severe scree slopes, rolling fells or the knotted landscape which The Lakes is so famous for.

The first pass we cross is another seldom used route, offering one of the best views down into the Buttermere Valley and across to the giant summits of Grasmoo, Wandope and Robinson beyond. The riding is all off-road, and by now we should stop raving about how much of a great mixture it is, singletrack, excitement, etc. etc! After a good lunch we enjoy some great lakeside singletrack, then tackle the 2 mile road climb over Honister Pass, before winding along and down a spectacular gravel and rocky descent into the heart of the Borrowdale Valley.

Through the Northern Peaks (day 6)

This final ride brings us up past the Derwent shoreline and then climbs between the dominant peaks in the northern Lake District - Skiddaw and Blencathra. It's a great run through the mountains, with the southern skline dominated by row of peaks that leads up to Helvellyn.

As we emerge from the mountains for the last time and blaze down into the little village of Mosedale, you'll know that the end of five incredible biking days is almost in sight. Once we reach our guesthouse in Penrith you'll get a superb afternoon tea, time to relax, then a great meal out to celebrate the achievement.

Heading home (day 7)

After a comfy night in the guesthouse you're free to have a leisurely breakfast and enjoy your Saturday as you please. There are unguided ride options for the superkeen, a local spa for massages or you can just head home to relax.



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FURTHER INFORMATION

Accommodation on tour

The price you pay for your holiday includes all accommodation, staying in a mixture of good guesthouses and friendly, small hotels - all hand picked by us. The accommodation is based on two people sharing each room, and includes a large English breakfast each morning as well as afternoon tea and cakes at the end of each biking day. If you wish to have sole occupancy of a room for the whole tour a supplement of 90 pounds is payable.

Cycling Support

Throughout the ride you'll only need to carry the clothing, equipment and sometimes food you need each day as our vehicle will move bags on from point to point. However please note that this is not a rescue or backup vehicle and this is not part of the service on this tour – the whole idea behind the Epic is that it is a self-powered loop, except in the most extreme circumstances where assistance is vital.

The guide leading this tour will always be a highly experienced, qualified leader and instructor, usually with a Mountain Leader qualification in addition to the top level SMBLA qualifications. They will also be an expert in the local trails and terrain, know how to avoid problems, fix bikes and get local assistance if needed.

However, some bike problems are not easy to fix on a ride and for this reason we suggest that you bring a bike that is in good working order. Our guide will travel with a fairly comprehensive toolkit and selection of spares, and you can put your own items in your bags to travel with you from night to night too. If necessary there are bike shops along the way which can help with major repairs.

Cycle Hire

If you want to use your own bike for this trip then you are welcome to do so, although we strongly recommend that you go through our pre-tour bike preparation notes with care. If you prefer to rent, we offer excellent bikes from Specialized or other brands. Please call us to discuss bike rental so we can find the right option for you.

Clothing and Equipment

On booking, a detailed list of useful and essential items will be sent to you. You must bring your own, properly fitting cycle helmet that must be worn for all cycle rides.



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