

DISCOVER THE UK NATIONAL PARKS

Your guide to Britain's most
treasured landscapes

The logo for National Parks, featuring a white triangle pointing to the left.

**National
Parks**

www.nationalparks.uk

WELCOME, GROESO, FAÏLTE.

The beauty of the untamed British countryside has been celebrated for centuries. In his 1810 guide to the landscape, Wordsworth famously declared the Lake District “A sort of national property, in which every man has a right and interest who has an eye to perceive and a heart to enjoy”. He was, of course, describing a future National Park.

The poet’s definition remains true to this day. There are now 15 National Parks on our shores, once fought for by countryside revolutionaries, since established to steward our most valuable natural assets, and now providing access to open country for all. They harbour our most precious wildlife, protect our beloved countryside landscapes and are a source of immeasurable pleasure for the millions who visit each year.

More than that, the parks also play a vital role in the health, wellbeing and prosperity of those who live in and around them. They are full of life in every sense. Thousands of people live and work within National Park boundaries, and farms, villages and towns are also protected for their important cultural heritage.

So explore to your heart’s content – entry is completely free. Experience quintessential rural life, discover extraordinary and unique landscapes and breathe thousands of years of human history. Welcome to the UK National Parks.

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Photo: Rambler taking
in the view from Haytor,
Dartmoor National Park
©Dan Cook

NATIONAL PARKS AT A GLANCE



Key Facts

- There are **15 National Parks in the UK**, spanning the length and breadth of the country. 10 in England, three in Wales and two in Scotland. National Parks protect almost 10 percent of England, 20 percent of Wales and eight percent of Scotland.
- Almost **half a million people live within National Parks** in thriving, welcoming communities.
- The **oldest National Park is the Peak District**, founded in 1951 and protected because of its impressive gritstone edges, steep limestone dales, moorland, farmland and caverns famed for rare Blue John stone.
- The **South Downs is the newest National Park**, established in 2010 for its hundreds of square kilometres of woodland, bustling market towns, rolling chalk uplands and river valleys.
- The **Lake District National Park is a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site** and is part of a special family of iconic places across the planet, such as Hadrian's Wall in Northumberland National Park, the Taj Mahal, Machu Picchu, Easter Island and the Great Barrier Reef.
- The Pembrokeshire Coast National Park is the **only National Park to be designated primarily for its coastline**, the whole of which can be walked via the 300-kilometre Pembrokeshire Coast Path National Trail.

- **The Broads is the smallest National Park** at around 305 square kilometres, with almost 200 kilometres of navigable, meandering waterways to explore.
- The largest National Park in the UK is the Cairngorms. At 4,528 square kilometres, **it's bigger than the whole of Luxembourg.**

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FIND YOUR NATIONAL PARK

Look out for these icons to help you find your perfect National Park.



From red squirrels and grey seals to swallowtail butterflies; these National Parks are great for wildlife spotting.



Evidence of thousands of years of human occupation can be discovered in these National Parks, from the Neolithic period to the Industrial Age.



Embrace the darkness. National Parks remain some of the darkest places in Britain and these are some of the best locations to be awed by the constellations above.



Packed with stately homes, crumbling castles, hunting forests and medieval market towns, these National Park landscapes have shaped our cultural identity over centuries.



Get your blood pumping. Climbing, mountain biking, caving and kayaking await, amongst an endless supply of other extreme activities to provide your adrenaline fix.



Discover England's National Parks by taking a guided trip to explore these precious landscapes and meet the people that live and work in them. Find out more about these experiences on page 38.



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NATIONAL PARKS FOR ALL

We work hard to make sure our inspiring National Parks are available to all, no matter their access needs. All National Parks offer accessible trails and many routes have accessible facilities.

Search '**accessible National Parks**' online for easy access routes and information on activities including guided Trumper walks, health hikes and buggy rambles.



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MILES WITHOUT STILES

The Miles without Stiles scheme is mapping National Park routes that are well surfaced and free from stiles, steps and narrow gates. Suitable for people with limited mobility, including wheelchair users, families with pushchairs, and the visually impaired, as well as dog walkers with less active dogs, the Lake District, Peak District, South Downs and Yorkshire Dales National Parks all have routes to explore.

Search '**Miles without Stiles**' online to discover more.

GETTING THERE AND AROUND

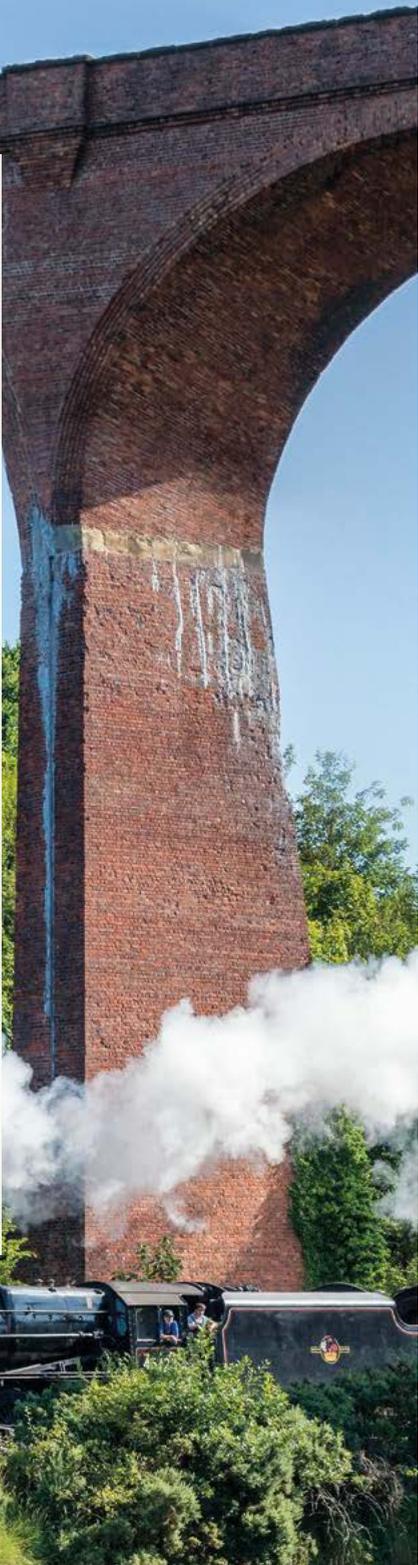
You don't always need a car to visit the National Parks. Most are easily accessible by train from key transport hubs such as London, Manchester, Birmingham, Cardiff and Glasgow. And lots of National Parks have special-service bus routes, connecting you to some of the UK's most fascinating local landmarks.

Top tips for getting around the UK National Parks on public transport

- Visiting the Lake District National Park? Take the number 800 summer bike bus from Windermere rail station north to Whinlatter Forest for mountain bike trails (via Ambleside, Grasmere, Rydal, Keswick and Braithwaite), or to Thirlspot for family-friendly routes around Thirlmere.
- For fantastic family bike rides, the Monsal Trail in the Peak District National Park is an 14-kilometre scenic cycle way along an old railway line between Bakewell and Blackwell Mill, part of over 100 kilometres of traffic-free cycle routes in the National Park.
- For a thoroughly Welsh adventure, the Snowdon Sherpa buses carry people and bikes on circular routes around Snowdonia National Park from Porthmadog and from Caernarfon to Pen-y-Pass for the Snowdon ascent.
- For those with young families or limited mobility, the Malham Tarn shuttle bus allows helps visitors explore the Yorkshire Dales without having to tramp up hillsides. It runs from Skipton rail station to the popular village of Malham, and up to England's highest lake, Malham Tarn.
- It is easy to plan rail travel around the UK on the National Rail website – nationalrail.co.uk. For international visitors, the BritRail pass provides unlimited rail travel throughout your stay at a great value price. Search 'BritRail Pass' online to buy.

Further details are given for each National Park later in this guide.

Photo: Steam Train passing through the North York Moors National Park



MEET THE RANGERS



©Nick Turner



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There is a good chance you will see our rangers out and about in the UK National Parks.

You'll find them working on the front line in National Parks and protected areas all around the world. This dedicated taskforce works year-round to protect, conserve, enhance and champion some of the country's best-loved landscapes.

In the UK, National Park rangers – or wardens as they're known in some Welsh National Parks – work across all habitats from the mountains of the wild rugged uplands to the waterways of the sublime southern wetlands. They play a key role in linking both local communities and visitors to the National Parks.

The role of rangers varies park by park. But most carry out practical work, making sure National Parks are accessible by maintaining public footpaths, trails, bridleways and byways and that visitors are safe by assisting emergency services such as mountain rescue and the coastguard.

Rangers are key in environmental education programmes, working with local or visiting schools to connect young people with nature. They also lead our thousands of volunteers on a variety of tasks from repairing footpaths to monitoring and surveying wildlife, and they

provide local communities with technical advice on everything from land management to protecting heritage buildings.

You can often find our rangers in National Park information and visitor centres, ready to lend a friendly hand or insightful advice to anyone who needs it.

Rangers are the eyes and ears of the National Parks and most have an unparalleled knowledge of the local history, ecology and culture of the area. Look out for ranger led walks and events to experience some of the best local insight.

Search 'Meet the Rangers' online for more information.

Photo: Pen y Fan is the highest mountain in southern Britain. Deservedly popular with walkers, the views from the summit are truly spectacular.

BRECON BEACONS NATIONAL PARK

A bubbling cauldron of mountainous landscape, rich heritage and Welsh legendary adventure. This designated European Geopark hosts vast sandstone cliffs and broad valleys peppered with quirky villages.

- This is a land sown with Welsh myths and legends, haunted castles and mysterious lakes. Once home to a Victorian opera diva; magic, music and miracles are in evident existence.
- Home to some of the most important cave systems in Europe, formation of the National Park's limestone underworld began over 300 million years ago. Guided trips are available to visit the famous caves.
- Traces of early inhabitants can be found in the remains of prehistoric stone circles and burial chambers, in Iron Age hillforts and the Roman cavalry camps dotted in the hills in the west of the National Park.
- Now millions visit each year, hiking, cycling, mountain biking, exploring underground or adventuring on the water. The Beacons have almost 2,000 kilometres of rights of way to be enjoyed.
- Coined by Bill Clinton as 'the Woodstock of the mind', the world famous Hay Festival of Literature and Arts takes place annually at the edge of the National Park.

Getting there

There are hourly direct trains to Abergavenny on the Cardiff-Manchester line, and good connections from other cities. National coach services operate from various UK destinations to Abergavenny, Cardiff and Swansea. Local buses will take you into Brecon.

Getting around

Local bus services run throughout the National Park and the famous Taff cycle trail runs from the centre of Cardiff to Brecon.

Follow the National Park

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-  /BreconBeaconsNationalPark
-  @visitbreconbeacons

breconbeacons.org



Did You Know?

The name *Brecon Beacons* is said to come from the ancient practice of lighting signal fires (beacons) on the mountains to warn of enemy attacks.



BROADS NATIONAL PARK

A watery wonderland, the Broads is Britain's largest protected wetland.

- Its shallow lakes were dug out in medieval times – the peat removed and used for fuel. For centuries afterwards it was assumed that the broads had been formed by natural processes – their true origins not being rediscovered until 1952.
- A haven for wildlife; despite comprising only 0.1% of the UK, the area boasts more than a quarter of its rarest species. The swallowtail, Britain's largest butterfly, calls the Broads – and only the Broads – home.
- Pleasure boating has been part of the way of life here since the 19th century and the National Park is still one of Europe's most popular inland waterways. Hire a day boat to explore the wetlands and winding waterways.
- Look out for the distinctive windmills dotting the landscape. Once used to drain the land, with a few serving to grind corn, many have been lovingly restored to their former glory.

Getting there

Greater Anglia operates a half-hourly train service between Norwich and London Liverpool Street with local connecting services within East Anglia. Average journey time from London is 1 hour 50 minutes. There are connecting services from the Midlands, the north of England and Scotland via Peterborough. Norwich Airport has worldwide connections through Amsterdam.

Getting around

The National Park is very well-served by local trains, with multiple stations within the park boundaries. First buses go from Norwich (Castle Meadow) to Hoveton/Wroxham and then on to Stalham. From Norwich Bus Station they go to Loddon, Beccles and then Lowestoft, for connections to Oulton Broad.

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Did You Know?

The Broads National Park contains over 200 kilometres of navigable waterways, seven rivers and 60 areas of open water.

Photo: River Ant at How Hill. The "Electric Eel" is an electric passenger boat on which visitors can take a trip through the maze of reed-fringed dykes. ©Tom Mackie

Part of The English National Park Experience Collection





Photo: Loch Morlich – home to a watersports centre with kayaking, sailing and windsurfing among the activities available.

Did You Know?

Local legend tells that An Lochan Uaine, the Green Loch, gets its vivid colour because the fairy folk wash their clothes in it.

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK

Welcome to the roof of Scotland. Goliath granite mountains dominate the natural and cultural heritage of the UK's largest National Park

- The Cairngorm plateau is the highest and most extensive range of arctic-alpine mountain landscape in Britain and the lofty Scottish National Park is home to four of the five highest mountains in the UK.
- A hillwalkers dream, there are 55 Munros – mountains above 3,000ft in height – in the park. Climb them to become a 'Munro bagger'.
- The National Park has some of the country's most spectacular driving routes. The Snow Roads Scenic Route is a 145 kilometre journey from Blairgowrie to Grantown-on-Spey traversing the highest public road in Britain.
- A stronghold for British wildlife, the National Park is home to rare and endangered species – including the majestic golden eagle and quirky capercaillie.
- People of the National Park also have a distinct identity. This is a place of 'mountain folk' and 'forest folk'. Separated by the great bulk of the mountains, different areas have their own unique customs and cultural traditions.

Getting there

There are good train links to Inverness, Glasgow and Edinburgh and a direct service from London and the south to Aviemore and Aberdeen. Express coaches from London Victoria, and all over the country make the journey up through Scotland to the west of the National Park and to nearby Aberdeen in the east.

Getting around

Cycle touring on and off-road is a great way to get to and around the National Park. National Cycle Route seven runs from Glasgow to Inverness passing through the west of the Cairngorms National Park. There are also a number of long distance walking routes; the Deeside, Speyside and Dava Ways connect many park communities.

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cairngorms.co.uk



Photo: Haytor has the form of a typical "avenue" tor, where the granite between the two main outcrops has been eroded away. Its characteristic shape is a notable landmark visible on the skyline from many places in south Devon between Exeter and Totnes.
© Dan Cook

DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK

A land of mist and mystery – steeped in folklore and a place of great literary inspiration, with a history of human settlement dating back over 4,000 years.

- 'It's a wonderful place, the moor. You cannot think of the wonderful secrets which it contains.' Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's descriptions of Dartmoor have captured the public imagination for over a century. The author was inspired to write his most famous novel *The Hound of the Baskervilles* whilst staying at The Duchy Hotel, now the National Park Visitor Centre, Princetown.
- Centuries on and life thrives here. Dartmoor's blanket bog, upland oakwood, caves and mines are among habitats of international importance, supporting fascinating and rare wildlife.
- The world's largest land slug is regularly found in Dartmoor's woodlands and the blue ground beetle, one of the rarest ground beetles found in the UK, is mainly restricted to Dartmoor.
- Bear witness to millennia of human existence. Prehistoric stone circles and standing stones are scattered across the high moor and the remains of Iron Age hillforts, medieval settlements and imposing granite crosses stand testament to Dartmoor's long history.
- Dartmoor is home to some 34,000 people and the former tin mining town of Chagford was voted by the Sunday Times newspaper as the best place to live in rural Britain.

Getting there

The Great Western Mainline train service runs through Devon, linking Exeter, Newton Abbot, Ivybridge (just on the southern edge of the National Park), Totnes and Plymouth with Bristol, London, and the rest of the country.

Getting around

From May to September: Every Saturday you can get the Haytor Hoppa bus from Newton Abbot to Widecombe. Every Sunday you can get the Dartmoor Sunday Rover train from Exeter to Okehampton. The best ways to explore Dartmoor are by bike, horseback or on foot, see the website for the best trails.

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dartmoor.gov.uk



Did You Know?

Dartmoor is one of the most important places in western Europe for Bronze Age archaeology – including the longest stone row in the world – a massive 3.4 km in length.

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Did You Know?

Exmoor was Europe's first International Dark Sky Reserve in recognition of its exceptional starry skies and commitment to protect them.

EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK

Wild open heather moorland and shady coastal woodlands perch atop the highest sea cliffs in the country, and have provided inspiration to William Wordsworth and other poetic greats.

- With its high sea cliffs and jutting rock formations, the Valley of Rocks, creates a true sense of drama within the National Park's 55km of coastline. Every summer, the surrounding acres of western gorse, ling and bell heather come alive with blooming amethyst-hued flora.
- Exmoor's bays are a treasure trove for fossil fiends. Keen eyes can discover reptile remains, ammonites, belemnites and extraordinary shells amongst the Jurassic and Triassic rocks.
- The National Park's most famous landmark is Tarr Steps – a stone clapper bridge shaded by ancient woodland. You can hike there from the town of Dulverton, along the banks of the River Barle.
- Ancient wooded valleys on Exmoor along with wild romantic moorlands are home to a host of fascinating wildlife, including majestic Red Deer, elusive otters, over 250 species of bird and some of the UK's rarest bats and butterflies.
- Exmoor is renowned for its fantastic local food producers. Oysters from the sea, venison from the moors and red ruby Devon beef from its rich farmland are all on offer.

Getting there

First Great Western and Cross Country rail services from across the country serve both Taunton and Tiverton Parkway stations, around a 60-minute bus journey from the National Park. The Tarka Line connects Exeter to Barnstaple – a 30 minute bus ride from Exmoor. It is approx. 1.5hrs car journey from Bristol or 3.5hrs from London.

Getting around

1,300 kilometres of trails are available for those exploring on foot, bike or horse, including several long distance routes. The Westcountry Way – a national cycle way – crosses the moor and provides links with rail stations at Barnstaple, Tiverton Parkway and Taunton. There are also local bus services – ask at one of the National Park Centres for the latest timetables.

Follow the National Park

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exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk



Photo: The Valley of Rocks, noted for its herd of feral goats, and for its geology. © Nigel Stone ENPA

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 **EXMOOR**
NATIONAL PARK



Did You Know?

The Lake District has its own local dialects and distinctive sports such as hound trailing, fell running, and Cumberland and Westmorland wrestling.

LAKE DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK

A UNESCO World Heritage Site and a National Park of epic proportions, The Lake District is home to Scafell Pike – England's highest mountain – and Wastwater, its deepest lake.

- The Lake District's geology provides a dramatic record of nearly 500 million years of history. Its complex landscape tells a story of colliding continents, deep oceans, tropical seas, and kilometre-thick ice sheets.
- There's a tradition of unrestricted access to the fells, plus an extensive network of public rights of way. Recreational walking can be traced back to Wordsworth's 'Guide to the Lakes'.
- Long revered by the creative community, the region experienced a 'revival' from the 18th century onwards. Artists and writers such as Turner, Coleridge and De Quincey were inspired by the area's astounding natural beauty.
- Centuries on and children's author Beatrix Potter remains an iconic Lake District literary figure. Potter spent many childhood holidays in the District and these influenced her work; you can follow in the author's footsteps around the Lake District with the National Trust's Beatrix Potter Trail.

Photo: Ullswater, the second largest lake in the English Lake District, being approximately 14.5 km long and 1.2 km wide.
© Andrew-Locking

Getting there

The West Coast mainline runs to the east of the Lake District, connecting Oxenholme, Penrith and Carlisle with London and Glasgow. A direct train runs from Manchester to Windermere. Local trains call at Kendal, Staveley and Windermere.

Getting around

Towns and villages such as Ambleside, Windermere, Coniston and Keswick are linked by bus, with extra services in the summer. A number of cycle routes link into the National Park from further afield including the famous C2C and the recently opened Lakes and Dales Loop.

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LOCH LOMOND & THE TROSSACHS NATIONAL PARK

Tranquil lochs, lofty mountains and rushing glens. The topography of Scotland's first National Park is as unique as its thrilling history.

- This is a place of two geographical halves. The Highland Boundary Fault – a fracture in the Earth's crust – runs straight through the National Park and separates the gently rolling Lowlands from the dramatic, mountainous Highlands to the north.

- Scotland's most popular walking route, the world famous West Highland Way, traverses the fault. Stretching 155 kilometers from Milngavie to Fort William, it takes in a huge variety of scenery along the way, from countryside parks to loch-shores and open moorlands to steep mountains.

- No visit to the National Park would be complete without a trip out on a loch. Peaceful cruises across the waters provide visitors with unique views of the surrounding mountains and wildlife. Swimming deer, eagles fishing and the iconic red squirrel can all be spotted around the National Park's 22 lochs and forests.

- Home to 21 Munros (mountains over 3,000ft), the National Park is a hill walker's paradise with epic views waiting for everyone from novices to experts.

- But Loch Lomond's history has seldom remained as tranquil as its landscape. Viking warriors visited from the west in 1263 to wreak havoc.

Getting there

ScotRail operate a direct line from Glasgow Queen Street to Balloch, on the banks of Loch Lomond. The operator's West Highlands route is considered one of the most scenic in the country and provides stops in and close to the National Park. Coaches travel through the park and stop at Criarlairich and Tyndrum.

Getting around

The National Park is serviced by local bus routes. Cruises and waterbus services provide regular ferry services between both shores of Loch Lomond at numerous disembarkation points. If you prefer travelling under your own steam, a network of foot and cycle routes span almost every nook and cranny of the park.

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lochlomond-trossachs.org



Photo: Conic Hill is a sharp little summit rising above Balmaha. Right on the Highland Boundary Fault, this short hillwalk offers truly fantastic views over Loch Lomond and its many islands. © Paul Barr



Did You Know?

Open water swimming is a popular activity in the National Park, with thousands of people taking the plunge each year during the Great Scottish Swim.



NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK

A mosaic of precious habitats where heaths, mires and bogs are nestled within ancient pasture woodland and farm land, this world capital for wildlife has survived in the busy south of England.

- Salt marshes, seabirds and spies. Not what you would expect from a primeval forest...
- but the New Forest has seen 500 years of military coastal defence. The shipbuilding village of Buckler's Hard also played a crucial part in World War II.
- Almost 900 years earlier, in 1079, William the Conqueror visited the area and proclaimed it his 'new hunting forest'. Today, his 'Nova Foresta' still retains the same mystery and romance as it did for the Norman King.
- The Forest is home to an ancient livestock grazing commoning system. This is how the iconic and hardy New Forest pony has come to be.
- Many visitors come to the Forest for its outstanding local food. Look out for the New Forest Marque, a sign of authentic New Forest fare of the highest quality.

Getting there

Regular trains and buses run to the New Forest, which is only about 90 minutes from London. Brockenhurst is the National Park's main rail centre. Trains also run to Ashurst, Beaulieu Road, and Sway.

Getting around

The New Forest National Park is well-served by a public bus network. There are also three New Forest Tour open top bus routes that operate during the summer season and connect to local rail stations.

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newforestnpa.gov.uk



Did You Know?

The annual autumnal New Forest tradition of pannage sees domestic pigs released to feast on the acorns, beech mast and other nuts that are poisonous to cattle and ponies.



Photo: New Forest ponies are one of the most recognised mountain and moorland or native breeds on the British Isles. They are valued for hardiness, strength, and sure-footedness.
© Nick Lucas



Photo: The mighty Hadrian's Wall, spanning 135 km in length from Wallsend on the east coast of England to Bowness-on-Solway on the west coast. © DTaylor NN

NORTHUMBERLAND NATIONAL PARK

Northumberland National Park, known as the 'land of far horizons', is home to England's cleanest rivers, purest air and darkest skies.

- Sitting within the Northumberland International Dark Sky Park – the largest area of protected night sky in Europe – here, on a clear night, you can see thousands of stars, the Milky Way and even the Andromeda Galaxy (2.5 million light years away). If you're lucky you might even spot the aurora borealis.
- The landscape under these stars is ancient. Hadrian's Wall snakes along the Northumberland's stunning crags and escarpments. A fixed frontier of the Roman Empire from coast to coast, it was once occupied by both soldiers and civilians.
- The landscape is just as wild today, and as the least populated of all the National Parks, nature thrives. Tranquillity, discovery and exploration belie the park's bloody history of wild border reivers and roman army camps.
- A good starting point to explore is The Sill, the park's National Landscape Discovery Centre, which has an excellent exhibition of the history, culture and heritage of Northumberland.

Getting there

Newcastle is the gateway to the National Park and is very well connected by rail from most cities. From Newcastle, the Tyne Valley Line takes you into the southern part of Northumberland National Park. Coaches service Newcastle and Carlisle from throughout the UK and multiple local bus companies connect Newcastle to the Park.

Getting around

In the summer months, the Hadrian's Wall Country Bus AD122 (after the date of the Emperor's visit) links major sites along the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site. 900 kilometres of waymarked footpaths and bridleways cover the National Park, or let the experts lead on the many guided walks that run throughout the year.

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Did You Know?

Tales of ancient giants, monsters and supernatural shapeshifters abound here. The duergers, a race of trolls from the Simonside Hills were feared as the most malicious and were thought to snatch weary travellers from the moors.

Part of The English National Park Experience Collection



Northumberland National Park



NORTH YORK MOORS NATIONAL PARK

The childhood home of one of the world's most successful explorers, the North York Moors National Park is steeped in history.

- There's a cacophony of life in the seas around the National Park. White-beaked dolphins and minke whales follow shoals of fish swimming south from the Arctic, and seal colonies loll beneath the coastal cliffs.
- Some older natural residents have long-since left their fossilised mark, with 160-million-year-old ammonites and even preserved dinosaur footprints common on the seashore.
- Further inland, centuries of history lay beneath your feet and before your eyes in abbey ruins, gothic churches, medieval chapels and ancient stone crosses.
- The National Park's moors and woodlands are alive with birdsong; the North Yorkshire Moors Railway is one of the world's greatest heritage railways and traverses 39 kilometers of National Park countryside.
- The famous pacific voyager Captain James Cook grew up in the North York Moors and began his seafaring career in the nearby town of Whitby in 1746 as an apprentice seaman.

Getting there

There are rail links from all over the country to stations in the towns surrounding the National Park – York, Malton, Scarborough, Middlesbrough, Whitby and Northallerton – and good bus links from the stations. National coaches also serve the region with drops at York, Thirsk, Northallerton, Scarborough and Middlesbrough, with excellent local connections.

Getting around

There's a good network of rail and bus services, serving many of the main towns and villages. But if you'd rather get around under your own two feet, the 175 kilometre Cleveland Way National Trail follows the edge of the National Park, from Helmsley to Filey and if you prefer two wheels, the Moor to Sea Cycle Network connects 240 kilometres of the North York Moors.

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northyorkmoors.org.uk



Did You Know?

South of Whitby is the old fishing village of Robin Hood's Bay. By the 18th century, Bay had gained a well-earned reputation as a smuggler's haunt. The origin of the village's name, and its link to the famous outlaw remains a mystery.

Photo: Robin Hood's Bay, a small former fishing village and a bay located eight kilometres south of Whitby and 24 km north of Scarborough. Taken from Ravenscar.
© Mike Kipling

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NORTH YORK MOORS NATIONAL PARK

PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK

Britain's original National Park, the Peak District is a land of countryside revolution, stately homes, plateaus and valleys, right in the heart of England.

- There's a Tolkienesque landscape divide here. The northerly Dark Peak is wilder, famed for its wild and exposed tracts of moorland top. Further south in the White Peak, gently rolling limestone plateaus are dissected by dales and colourful hay meadows.
- The landed gentry of the Peak District built some of the most resplendent historic houses and stately homes in the country here. Chatsworth House has been handed down through 16 generations of the Cavendish family and is open to visitors.
- Tight-knit communities thrive in the National Park, honouring distinctive customs. Well dressing – originally a pagan ceremonial pledge of flowers, seeds, twigs, nuts and berries to the water gods – is now a summer tradition in dozens of villages.
- The rebellious ramblers of the 1932 Kinder Mass Trespass were imprisoned for protesting on the moors for the right to have open access, eventually leading to legislation establishing the UK National Parks we have today.

Getting there

The neighbouring cities – Sheffield, Manchester and Derby, all have regular intercity rail services and onward connections to Matlock, Buxton and Hope Valley where regular bus services will take you into the heart of the Peak District National Park.

Getting around

There's a comprehensive bus network around the National Park, and with over 100 kilometres of off-road cycling trails and a network of quiet country roads, huge amounts of the park are also easily accessible on two wheels. Good train services operate to some of the National Park's iconic locations including Edale, on the doorstep of the Pennine Way.

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peakdistrict.gov.uk



Did You Know?

The name 'Peak' does not relate to mountains (there are none in the National Park) – it is thought to derive from the Pecsætan, an Anglo-Saxon tribe who settled the area.

Photo: Winnats Pass, Hope Valley. A local legend is that the pass is haunted after a young couple were murdered by miners in 1758.

Photo: Skrinkle Haven and Church Doors are two neighbouring small coves separated by a limestone headland, and are best visited around low tide.



PEMBROKESHIRE COAST NATIONAL PARK

A true seaside National Park, in one of the most ecologically rich and diverse landscapes in Wales.

- Within the only UK National Park designated primarily for its spectacular coastline, the Pembrokeshire Coast Path has been voted among the best hiking routes in the world. It passes by 80 beaches, many of them award-winning, and offers the chance to see stunning wildflowers and sea birds in spring and spot seal pups in autumn and winter.
- The National Park also includes one of only three Marine Nature Reserves in the UK. Skomer Island's cliff tops are well known for their colonies of colourful puffin, Manx shearwaters, razorbills, gannets and fulmars.
- Almost all of the Pembrokeshire Coast is covered by the National Park, along with every offshore island, the Daugleddau Estuary and large areas of the Preseli Hills and the Gwaun Valley.
- In true maritime style, pirates and smugglers once prowled the seas around Pembrokeshire and thousands of shipwrecks lie off the coast. One of the most famous and prolific pirates ever to sail the seven seas, Bartholomew 'Black Bart' Roberts was born in Little Newcastle, a few kilometres inland.

Getting there

Swansea has regular mainline services from a range of destinations across the country, including Cardiff and London. From there connect to the major stations at Tenby, Haverfordwest, and Fishguard and pick up local services to Whitland, Pembroke Dock, and Milford Haven.

Getting around

The park has an excellent network of buses that skirts beach and cliff to connect the beaches, villages and towns along the coast.

Follow the National Park

 @PembSCOAST

 /PembrokeshireCoast

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pembrokeshirecoast.wales



Did You Know?

Almost half of the world's population of Manx Shearwater – a cousin of the wandering albatross – breeds on the island of Skomer. The colony size is estimated at around 120,000 pairs of birds.



SNOWDONIA NATIONAL PARK

A land of lakes and a heaven for hikers, Snowdonia is brimming with natural treasures including the unique Snowdon lily and the rainbow beetle.

- Nine mountain ranges cover over half the National Park. Its biggest, Snowdon, is the highest mountain in Wales.
- The park sits in the ancient Kingdom of Gwynedd and is a stronghold of 'Cymraeg', the Welsh language. The local name for the National Park is Eryri and the Welsh language is the mother tongue of 65 per cent of the proud population here.
- A Welsh tradition of storytelling has ensured that the folkloric tales associated with almost every lake, hill, mountain of the National Park are still as vibrant today as they were in their early beginnings.
- The most famous of all legends are the Mabinogion, a series of medieval stories. Several places bear King Arthur's name and tales associated with caves across the region tell of a sleeping Arthur who awaits the call to return with his men to rescue Wales.

Photo: Llynau Mymbyr are two lakes located in Dyffryn Mymbyr, a valley running from the village of Capel Curig to the Pen-y-Gwryd hotel.

Getting there

North Wales is well connected by rail from most parts of Britain. Trains run as far as Bangor, on the north-western edge of Snowdonia. From the mainline station in the resort town of Llandudno, the Conwy Valley line provides connections down into Snowdonia National Park. The Cambrian Coast Railway also provides connections along Snowdonia's western coast. Coaches run to Llandudno, Bangor, Caernarfon and Porthmadog, from London, Manchester, Chester and other major hubs.

Getting around

A dedicated visitor bus network, the Snowdon Sherpa, operates on five different routes within the National Park. There are also seven heritage railways in and around Snowdonia and Snowdon Mountain Railway links the village Llanberis to the summit.

Follow the National Park

 @visitsnowdonia

 /visitsnowdonia

snowdonia.gov.wales



Did You Know?

In Welsh, the formidable mountain's name is Yr Wyddfa, shortened from Yr Wyddfa Fawr, meaning Great Tomb or Great Throne.



SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK

Known as the ‘gateway to England’, this landscape of rolling hills, ancient woodland and picture perfect villages holds the secrets of thousands of years of settlement from prehistory to Caesar’s conquering forces.

- Clues to the people who have lived in and shaped the South Downs can be found everywhere from Bronze Age burial mounds to Iron Age hill forts; Roman villas, historic stately homes and imposing Norman castles.
- Arundel Castle has been home to the Duke of Norfolk, the most senior peer in the realm for over 850 years, while the 1000-year-old Lewes Castle provides views over this historic market town and the chalk slopes that surround it.
- The South Downs has captivated some of Britain’s greatest literary and artistic figures, from Jane Austen, to Rudyard Kipling to the Bloomsbury Group and Virginia Woolf, who said in her diaries “The Downs... too much for one pair of eyes, enough to float a whole population in happiness, if only they would look.”
- Scientists have also been drawn to the area for its extraordinarily rich wildlife. The home of pioneering naturalist Gilbert White’s can still be visited in Selborne.

Getting there

The South Downs is unique in having the largest market towns of any UK National Park – Lewes and Petersfield, which have rail routes to London. From these gateways connect to the heart of the South Downs in Amberley in the Arun Valley, Southease in the Ouse Valley or Liss in Hampshire.

Getting around

Walking is a great way to see the South Downs and there are 3,300 kilometres of footpaths and the iconic South Downs Way National Trail to enjoy. Brighton’s open topped Breeze Buses connect you directly to the downland. Stretching from ancient Winchester, through to the white chalky cliffs of the Seven Sisters and Beachy Head at Eastbourne, almost all of the stunning 160 kilometre South Downs Way is blissfully off-road and is the only UK National Trail fully accessible to cyclists.

Follow the National Park

 @sdnpa
 /sdnpa
 @southdownsnp
southdowns.gov.uk



Did You Know?

South Downs sparkling wine is gaining an award-winning reputation across the world and has been served by the Queen at Buckingham Palace. These chalk hills are made of the same rock that runs through the French Champagne region.

Photo: The Seven Sisters is a series of world-famous chalk cliffs overlooking the English channel.

Part of The English National Park Experience Collection



SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK

Photo: Hay meadows near Muker, Swaledale

YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK

Spectacular limestone scenery and traditional farming landscapes meet expansive heather moorland tops.

- Snaking for thousands of kilometres across the National Park is an unmistakable patchwork of dry stone walls. Over 8,000 kilometres of these ancient land boundaries traverse the Dales, along with around 6,000 traditional farm buildings.
- The area's long history of livestock farming has given rise to its own sheep breeds. Livestock sales and agricultural shows play an important part in the lives of local communities.
- Today's burgeoning cheese scene in the Dales is thanks in part to the Cistercian monks who brought their fromage-making skills over from Normandy in the 11th century.
- The world-famous Settle-Carlisle railway runs through the National Park from north to south. Renowned for its evocative Victorian architecture, the line passes over huge stone viaducts, through long tunnels and past remote wayside station buildings.
- Thirsty? Try the 17th century Tan Hill Inn, Britain's highest pub at 1,732 feet above sea level.

Getting there

Cities and towns close to the National Park including York, Leeds, Bradford, Harrogate, Skipton, Lancaster, Penrith, Darlington, Northallerton and Ripon are well-linked by national rail and coaches. The Dales can then be reached by a range of local bus services.

Getting around

Two national rail services serve the Yorkshire Dales, the Leeds-Morecambe line and the famous Leeds-Settle-Carlisle railway. Bus services within the National Park run throughout the year linking the main towns, villages, and attractions, with additional services running during the summer months. Walking routes span the park and include the famous Three Peaks Challenge of Pen-y-ghent, Ingleborough and Wharfedale.

Follow the National Park

 @yorkshire_dales

 /yorkshiredales

 @yorkshiredales

yorkshiredales.org.uk



Did You Know?
Before Malham Cove was used as a filming set for 'Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows', the majestic cliff is also thought to have inspired J.R.R. Tolkien's fort of Helm's Deep in 'The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers'.

 Part of
**The English
 National Park
 Experience
 Collection**


YORKSHIRE DALES
 National Park

DISCOVER ENGLAND'S NATIONAL PARKS

Wherever we travel, we seek out those places in which we can experience more than just the usual tourist traps – we want to absorb the landscapes and cultures of the land we are travelling through.

The new English National Park Experience Collection will give travellers the opportunity to experience first-hand these living landscapes, where residents and communities work the land, shape

the environment and make their living. These easily accessible and bookable experiences, teamed with quality accommodation and transport, will create lifetime memories

from our iconic landscapes. This collection will be available in 2019 to overseas tour operators and agents to sell to their customers.



Visit nationalparkexperiences.co.uk to discover more.

THE WORLD'S NATIONAL PARKS

The UK National Parks are part of a worldwide family of hundreds of thousands of protected areas covering over 6% of the Earth's land surface.

The history of the world's National Parks begins in the USA in 1872, when an area of the Rocky Mountains called Yellowstone was the first to be protected as a National Park.

Today, the 15 UK National Parks are in the company of some of the world's greatest natural

attractions including the Great Barrier Reef in Australia, the Grand Canyon in the USA, the Serengeti in Tanzania and the Galapagos Islands in Ecuador.

UK National Parks differ from some others because of the significance and importance of the people who live and work

in them. In our National Parks, the interaction of people and nature over time has produced areas of distinct character with significant, ecological, biological, cultural and scenic value.



Visit www.nationalparks.uk to discover more.

Photos top to bottom: • Shop view, Castleton – Peak District National Park • Seal, Horsey Gap – Broads National Park • Daffodils & Boats, Thurne – Broads National Park • Singleton Cricket Club – South Downs National Park • Strumble Head Lighthouse – Pembrokeshire Coast National Park • Pony, Haytor – Dartmoor National Park • Staithe, evening lights – North York Moors National Park • Dent village – Yorkshire Dales National Park • Osprey – Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park • Red Squirrel, Loch an Eilein – Cairngorms National Park • Red Deer, Cairngorms National Park • Goat, Valley of Rocks – Exmoor National Park • Lake Ogwen – Snowdonia National Park • Wensleydale Creamery – Yorkshire Dales National Park • Sheepdog, East Bog Farm – Northumberland National Park.

Cover image: • The Great Ridge – Peak District National Park © Jay Birmingham



NATIONAL PARKS AT A GLANCE



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