

# COAST TO COAST - SEPTEMBER 2023

## General Walk Information, Fitness & Training Plan

This Information Sheet covers the key points about the practicalities of walking this route.

Please ensure you read everything carefully and ask early on if you have any questions.

Dear Coast to Coast walker

Thank you for booking the Coast to Coast long distance trail, which is one of the world's finest walks. My name is **MARK REID** and I will be guiding you along this fantastic walk. I am a fully qualified **MOUNTAIN LEADER** with a wealth of experience walking along the paths, tracks and trails across the North of England. I have written 17 walking guidebooks about the North of England, and so I am very much looking forward to sharing my passion for the hills with you. I am also a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. This year will be my 7th time walking the Coast to Coast route, although I have walked many of the paths in the Lake District, Yorkshire Dales and North York Moors scores of times. I know this area extremely well, as I live in the heart of North Yorkshire and have spent the past 26 years walking in the Lakes, Dales & Moors - it's how I make my living!

I really want you to enjoy the experience, so please read through the following information carefully. Please take particular note of the **TRAINING PLAN**; the more training you put in before this walk, then the more enjoyment you will get from the walk.

If you have any **QUESTIONS** then please get in touch. Mark Reid's contact details are:

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### **TRAINING & PREPARATION - IMPORTANT, PLEASE READ!**

This is a long-distance multi-day walk that covers nearly 200 miles. You will be walking for 14 consecutive days across the mountains, hills, fells, valleys and farmland across the North of England, with the length of each day varying from 8 to 20 miles. **The average distance is 15 miles per day and there are no rest days.**

The terrain will include valleys, hills, fells, moorland & steep mountain climbs. Some of the terrain is rocky, wet, muddy, boggy, slippery and uneven, including loose rocks and stones. Some of the hills and mountains are high, remote and wild, with the potential for wet and windy weather conditions. There are stream crossings, stiles, road crossings & some road walking. We may also experience mist or darkness on any of the walking days. **On several days there are sustained climbs up and down hills and/or mountains, particularly in the Lake District and even on the easier days there is some uphill.** The Uplands of Northern England are definitely not flat, in fact the total ascent during the trip is roughly equal to the height of Everest!

**This walk requires a high level of fitness and stamina. It is a strenuous walk and it is likely that you may have to skip days or curtail your walk early if you are not prepared. You should invest time in being fit for hill walking and your training should include walks in the hills in wet and windy weather.**

Good preparation includes being fit and able to walk long distances in difficult terrain. **To get the most from this walk, please increase your exercise and activity levels for AT LEAST THREE MONTHS leading up to this walk**, by walking as much as possible and increasing your general activity levels. Walk as much as possible - to the shops, to work, at lunchtime, at weekends, and incorporate exercise as part of your daily lifestyle. Also include other types of exercise such as swimming, cycling, jogging and the gym. Build up slowly and steadily; if you are in any doubt then please seek specialist advice. Build up your walks so that you are doing regular long-distance training walks (over 12 miles), and include hills and rough terrain as much as possible. We will aim to walk at an average moving speed of 4kph. This may be as slow as 2kph on steep ascents and as fast as 5kph on flatter stretches such as quiet lanes.

**As part of your training please complete at least FOUR WALKING WEEKENDS, where you walk for a full day on Saturday and on Sunday. This will give you an idea of the fitness and stamina required for multi-day walking. A full day's walk is anything over 12 miles / 5 hours of walking.**

## OVERVIEW OF THE WALK

- Wainwright's route is quoted as being 192 miles. This distance is an estimation from flat maps. There are hills, mountains and rough terrain along the way, as well as high/low route options on some days (*we will discuss these options during the walk*). We will also make little detours to viewpoints, cafes and your B&B at the end of each day. Therefore, all distances are approximate. On our previous guided trips the actual distance recorded has been around 200 miles.
- You will be walking for fourteen consecutive days across the mountains, hills, fells, valleys and farmland of the Lake District, North Pennines, Yorkshire Dales, Vale of Mowbray and North York Moors, with the length of each day varying from 8 to 20 miles.
- There are no rest days. If you need a rest day then the Coast to Coast Packhorse minibus can give you a lift to the next stop when they move your bags in the morning although this has to be pre-arranged the evening before.
- You will be guided along this route by a fully qualified Mountain Leader, who also holds a current Outdoor First Aid certificate.
- The Lake District section of this walk heads across **mountainous terrain** (Days 2 to 5), whilst the Yorkshire Dales and North York Moors sections head across **high moorland terrain** on days 6, 7, 8 and 12, 13 and 14. **Mountainous and/or High Moorland terrain means:** steep paths, lots of rocks and boulders, streams to jump across, rough and uneven ground, wet and boggy ground, heather and tussock grass moorland, high ground that is exposed to potentially bad weather (with potential for physical discomfort).
- There are sustained ascents and descents on many of the days, and the highest point of the walk is Kidsty Pike (780 metres above sea level) in the Lake District (Day 5).

## VIDEO & BLOG OF THE WALK

Here is a link to two VIDEOS I took walking the Coast to Coast in 2017 and 2022, which will give you an idea of the terrain, landscapes, weather etc

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h9kOojcCyh4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VOVT3hOkKf0>

Also, here is a BLOG I wrote about my 2017 Coast to Coast walk

<https://coast2coastjune2017.blogspot.com/2017/04/coast-to-coast-2017.html>

Please do your own research. There are lots of on-line resources, blog pages and videos online. We also suggest you have a read of one of these guidebooks; Trailblazer is particularly good:

<https://trailblazer-guides.com/book/coast-to-coast-path>

<https://www.cicerone.co.uk/the-coast-to-coast-walk-fourth>

**ITINERARY** - *all distances and timings are approximate.*

The Coast to Coast Packhorse minibus will arrive at St Bees beach car park just after 10am on Sunday (Day 1). If you are making your own way to St Bees then we will meet you at **10am on Sunday** at St Bees beach car park on the seafront (outside the toilet block). After picking up a pebble and dipping our toes in the Irish Sea, we will start our walk at around 10:30am.

DAY 1 - St Bees to Ennerdale Bridge (15 miles)

DAY 2 - Ennerdale Bridge to Seatoller (14 miles)

DAY 3 - Rosthwaite to Grasmere (9 miles)

DAY 4 - Grasmere to Patterdale (8 miles)

DAY 5 - Patterdale to Shap (15 miles)

DAY 6 - Shap to Kirkby Stephen (20 miles)

DAY 7 - Kirkby Stephen to Keld (12 miles)

DAY 8 - Keld to CB Inn (10 miles)

DAY 9 - CB Inn to Richmond (13 miles)

DAY 10 - Richmond to Danby Wiske (15 miles)

DAY 11 - Danby Wiske to Osmotherley (12 miles)

DAY 12 - Osmotherley to Blakey Ridge (20 miles)

DAY 13 - Blakey Ridge to Grosmont (14 miles)

DAY 14 - Grosmont to Robin Hood's Bay (15 miles)

### Walk start times

From Day 2 onwards we will start walking between **9am** and **9:30am** each day (depending on the day's mileage), as this will allow us time to enjoy the walk. We will have rest break for snacks and drinks approximately every 2 hours, as well as a break for lunch. Breaks will tend to be short and "on the hill" but these will depend on the overall progress during the day. Where possible breaks will be timed to make use of cafes that we pass and/or toilets. Lunch will be 30 minutes.

There are some exceptions where we will start walking at **8:30am** on Days 6, 12 and 14 (*Please discuss an early breakfast with your B&B when you arrive*).

### Walk finish times

The aim will be to finish each day between 5 and 6pm, with the exception of some of the shorter days when we will finish mid afternoon. At the end of each day I will guide you into the centre of the village or town, and then everyone will make their own way to their accommodation. Most people will be staying in the same B&B & many of the villages are quite small, so it will be easy. On the longer days (days 6 & 12) the finish time will be around 6pm.

### FOOD & REFRESHMENTS ALONG THE ROUTE EACH DAY

**Please provide a packed lunch as well as at least 2 litres of water each day.**

Your B&B/hotel will make a packed lunch for you, which will cost in the region of £6 - £10. There are shops in most overnight stops, where you can buy snacks, drinks, sandwich or souvenirs. During the walk, we will have regular short breaks for drinks and snacks, with an additional stop for lunch.

There are occasionally some cafes along the route, although these cannot be relied upon for food and/or drinks. There are also refreshments available in the odd rural village hall, church or farmhouse. If we pass a cafe and it's open, then we'll call in for a cup of tea.

Cafes on Days: 2, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14

### EVENING MEALS

I will arrange a group evening meal at either our accommodation or a nearby pub or restaurant. There is a particularly good Fish & Chip takeaway at Shap, Indian restaurant at Kirkby Stephen and Italian restaurant at Richmond. *These group meals are optional and are not included in the price.*

### FACILITIES IN OVERNIGHT STOPS

There are well-stocked village shops at Grasmere, Shap, Kirkby Stephen, Reeth, Richmond, Northallerton, Osmotherley, Gosmont and Robin Hood's Bay. There are pubs in ALL overnight stops. There are outdoor equipment shops at Grasmere, Kirkby Stephen, Richmond and Northallerton.

Cashpoints are limited along the way, so please bring cash and cards. There are cashpoints at Grasmere, Shap, Kirkby Stephen and Richmond.

### LAUNDRY SERVICE

Many of the B&Bs that used to offer a laundry service are no longer offering this service. You can leave a bag of spare socks and clothes etc in your car at Kirkby Stephen and then pick this bag up early on Day 7 (*we won't get into Kirkby Stephen until around 6pm at the end of Day 6 when the car park will be locked*). My experience of this walk is that I always bring too many evening clothes and not enough socks and base layers!

### BOOTS

Please ensure your walking boots are well worn-in, comfortable and are waterproof & have good ankle support. Bring blister plasters with you, and buy good walking socks. Basically, your boots are the most important thing. If you get blisters then each step will be painful, and you'll take around 500,000 steps to walk the Coast to Coast!

## WHAT TO WEAR WHILST WALKING

- Base layer - long-sleeved T-shirt
- Mid layer - fleece
- Outer layers - Waterproof Jacket and Waterproof Over-trousers
- Walking trousers
- Warm hat and waterproof gloves / sunhat and suncream
- Good quality walking socks
- Comfortable, waterproof walking boots with good ankle support
- Walking poles and gaiters are a good idea
- Lightweight sit mat

*Please ensure clothing is made from synthetic materials. Please do NOT wear cotton, as cotton soaks up moisture & will make you cold. You only need to wear waterproofs if it's raining, cold or windy.*

## WHAT TO CARRY IN YOUR DAY RUCKSACK (25 - 30 litre rucksack)

- Spare fleece and spare gloves
- Waterproof Jacket and Waterproof Over-trousers
- Warm hat, sun-hat, sun-cream and sunglasses
- Lightweight sit-mat (our lunches will be eaten *alfresco!*)
- Head-torch and spare batteries
- Money/cards for cafes or shops
- 2 litres of water (& flask of hot drink)
- Packed lunch & Snack food
- Hand sanitiser & face covering
- Small first aid kit, including blister plasters, and any personal medications
- 2-person shelter

*Pack everything in a waterproof bag inside your rucksack. Put your mobile phone in a waterproof case.*

## OTHER POINTS TO CONSIDER

Think carefully about what you take with you and wear. Good quality outdoor clothing and boots will make all the difference in bad weather; there's nothing worse than walking in the rain and your waterproofs are not up to scratch!

Sandals, flip-flops or crocs are a good idea for the evening to let your feet 'breathe'. Bring a carrier bag in your suitcase for your smelly socks.

Please take time researching this route; there are numerous books, websites and blogs about this walk which will give you a good idea of what the walk entails.

Practice walking with your rucksack packed with everything you're going to carry with you, to get used to the weight and also adjust the fit for comfort. Choose a rucksack that has a rigid back to stop it slumping and pulling downwards, and also a small air gap between this rigid back and your own back to minimise sweating.

Walking poles are a great idea and will reduce the impact on your knees. Use two poles, and practice walking with them. Your forearms should be horizontal when holding your walking poles. Avoid putting your hands through the wrist-loops, as this may cause an injury if you slip over.

The air temperature drops 1 degree C with every 100 metres of ascent, and wind speed is double on the top of hills and mountains as it is in the valleys. This means that the hills and mountains can feel very different from the valleys with wind, rain, mist and cool temperatures all year round.

The most common 'accidents' outdoors are slips, trips and falls. The paths are uneven and slippery in places, so please keep your hands out of your pockets & look for good foot placement with every step.

If it's sunny, please apply sunscreen and wear a hat to avoid sunburn.

### **WHEN TO STOP WALKING**

Something may happen along the way that makes it difficult to continue walking... blisters, strained muscles, sore knees, illness etc. This may mean that you need to have a rest day or two to recuperate. Please 'listen' to your body, which will avoid a simple injury becoming something more serious that takes longer to recover from.

*Updated November 2022*