



# Windermere, Rydal & Grasmere

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Waterhead, Ambleside

## 1. Introduction

A public transport adventure through the central Lake District which includes magnificent scenery and visits some wonderful towns, villages, lakes and attractions along the way.

### Itinerary summary

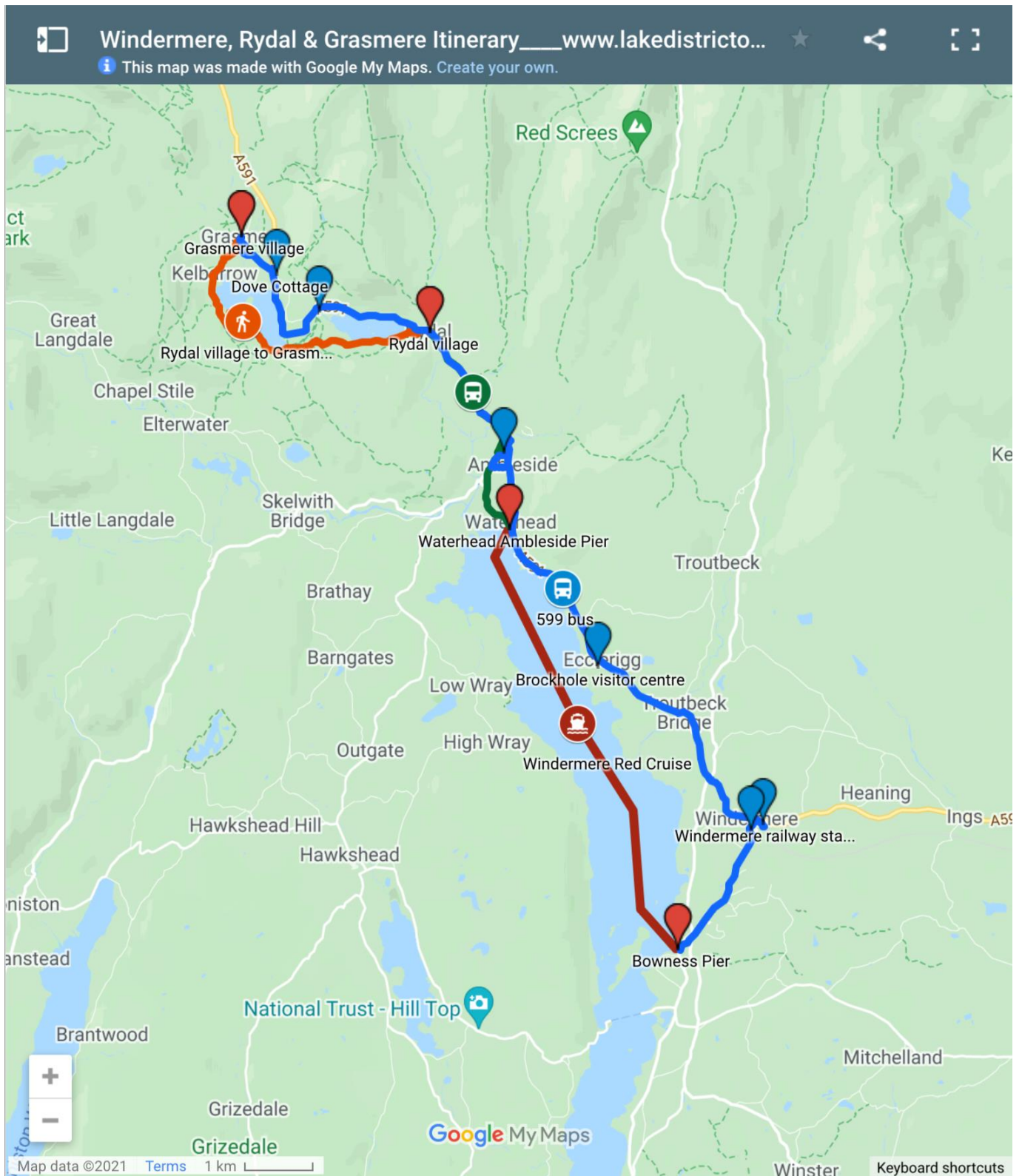
Starting at the popular town of Bowness-on-Windermere, you can explore the town and its various attractions before taking a Windermere Lake Cruise to Waterhead (Ambleside). Explore Waterhead before taking a bus through Ambleside to Rydal village where you will find Rydal Mount, the former home of William Wordsworth. From Rydal village an excellent and relatively easy walk takes you along the shores of Rydal Water and Grasmere lake to the village of Grasmere. After exploring the village, take the open top bus which returns you to Bowness-on-Windermere in one go.

This itinerary suggests a few of the best attractions to visit and lists others that you might want to include. It can easily be done in a day, allowing some time to explore attractions at each stop. An example schedule is included along with current prices. It can also be done at any time of year although the frequency of services is less over the winter.

The suggested start is Bowness-on-Windermere, but of course it can be started anywhere along the route or done in a different order. A route map is included below, an interactive version is available via the website [here](#).

Bus, boat and train stop locations are given in [What3words](#) format, an easy and precise way to navigate if you download the app.

## 2. Itinerary map



An interactive map is available on the website [here](#).

### 3. Itinerary description

#### Stop 1. Bowness-on-Windermere town.



Bowness-on-Windermere centre

Bowness is an attractive and very popular tourist town on the shores of Windermere lake. Until the mid-1800's it was a small peaceful village but all that changed with the opening of the railway line from Kendal to nearby Windermere town in 1847. Victorian tourists started pouring in to the area and the towns of Windermere and Bowness grew massively to meet the tourist demand. Nowadays the two towns merge together and are regularly filled with tourist crowds but Bowness still retains a lot of charm by the lake with plenty of attractions and is worth exploring.

One of the most popular attractions in the town centre is [The World of Beatrix Potter](#). The famous children's author wrote 23 enchanting little books in the early 1900's, with characters such as Peter Rabbit, Squirrel Nutkin and Jemima Puddle-Duck still much loved across the world. This popular family attraction recreates 3D scenes from the stories which mesmerizes children and adults alike. The town centre itself has numerous shops, cafes and pubs where you can easily spend some time exploring before wondering down past [St Martin's Church](#) to the nearby lakeside area.

The picturesque lakeside area overlooking Bowness Bay is slightly separate to the town centre but often just as busy. There are a number of jetties where you can catch one of the many [Windermere Lake Cruises](#). Beyond the jetties is Glebe Road which forms a popular loop along the lake shore. Within this loop is a large open recreational area known as The Glebe. The grassy area provides lovely views up the lake and there are various activities available such as mini golf and tennis. Beyond The Glebe is Cockshott Point which also has some good open grassy areas with shingle beaches and a [footpath](#) along the attractive lakeshore. There are a number of shops, kiosks, cafes and pubs around the lakeside area.



Bowness-on-Windermere lakeside

A short distance out of town along Rayrigg Road is the impressive [Windermere Jetty Museum](#) where you can learn all about the last 200 years of Windermere's boating history, with fascinating displays and many historic boats. Approx 1.5 miles to the south of the town is the iconic [Blackwell House](#), a beautiful example of Arts and Crafts architecture.

Buses stop in the town centre and at the lakeside area, adjacent to Windermere lake cruises. The Windermere ferry is a short walk away, beyond Cockshott Point. It is approx 1.5 miles from Windermere railway station to Bowness centre, mostly downhill walk or catch one of the many buses.



## Travelling:



Travel from Bowness to Waterhead (Ambleside) on board a Windermere Lake Cruise boat. Soak up the wonderful scenery as you head northwards up the lake towards spectacular mountains, including the iconic Langdale Pikes in the distance.



Windermere cruise

Route	Bowness-on-Windermere to Waterhead (Ambleside)
Transport	Windermere Lake Cruises - Red Cruise
Start	Bowness Pier, Bowness-on-Windermere, LA23 3HQ. <a href="#">///subway.marinated.roof</a>
End	Waterhead Pier, Waterhead, Ambleside, LA22 0EY. <a href="#">///verbs.reverted.markets</a>
Duration	30-35 minutes
Frequency	Daily, approx every 30 minutes Easter to November, 45 minutes in winter
Transport features	Commentary, toilets, light refreshments

Notes – Some Red Cruises also stop at [Brockhole visitor centre](#) and [Windermere Jetty Museum](#) on route. Brockhole jetty [///convert.jokers.artichoke](#). Windermere Jetty Museum [///torches.super.cringes](#)

## Stop 2. Waterhead (Ambleside).



Waterhead from Borrans Park

As the name suggests, Waterhead marks the head of Windermere lake and you will find quite a few attractions in this attractive village near to Ambleside town. The most obvious feature is the lake and there is plenty of shoreline access with excellent views across the water. The small promenade makes a pleasant stroll and there are a few benches from where you can watch the boats coming and going. [Windermere Lake Cruises](#) call at the main pier here and you can take a scenic red cruise to Bowness and Lakeside or a seasonal Green cruise to nearby Wray Castle and Brockhole.

At the other end of the promenade, the [Wateredge Inn](#) has a fabulous beer garden overlooking the lake. If you walk beyond the pub you soon come to Borrans Park which provides good open grassy areas and small shingle beaches overlooking the lake. Beyond the park is [Ambleside Roman Fort](#) which was probably built during the reign of the Emperor Hadrian (AD 117–138), around the same time as Hadrian's Wall was built in north Cumbria. It is free entry to the fort and although not much remains of it now, you can still see the foundations of the various buildings with information boards around the site telling you more. The Romans certainly had a magnificent view from their fort with mountain and lake scenery all around.

There are a few small gift shops, stalls and cafes in the Waterhead area, along with public toilets.

Buses stop outside the Waterhead Hotel and the boat jetty is nearby.

## Travelling:



Take the bus from Waterhead (Ambleside) to Rydal village. The bus passes through [Ambleside town](#) and you can alight here if you want to explore the town (buses stop in the town centre on Kelsick Road). Or, it is an easy walk along the road from Waterhead to Ambleside, approx 1 mile. The bus passes the iconic Bridge House as you leave Ambleside and heads into glorious Lake District mountain scenery before soon arriving at Rydal village.



Bridge House, Ambleside

Route	Waterhead (Ambleside) to Rydal village
Transport	599 open top bus (open top weather permitting)
Start	Waterhead Hotel, Waterhead, Ambleside, LA22 0EY. <a href="http://prospers.thud.vast">///prospers.thud.vast</a>
End	Rydal Church, Rydal, Ambleside, LA22 9LR. <a href="http://reddish.challenge.canny">///reddish.challenge.canny</a>
Duration	15 minutes
Frequency	Every 20 minutes Easter to November. Every 60 minutes in winter.
Transport features	Open top (conditions permitting), USB charging, audio commentary and can take 2 bikes.

Notes – You can also catch a 555 bus from Waterhead Hotel to Rydal village. That bus stop is on the A591 near the Waterhead Hotel [///invested.brass.mouths](http://invested.brass.mouths). Frequency is hourly all year round, every 30 mins Monday to Saturday from July to September.

### Stop 3. Rydal village.



Rydal Mount

The small village of Rydal is located near to Rydal Water, between Ambleside and Grasmere, with some good attractions. At the top of the steep lane off the main A591 is [Rydal Mount](#) where the famous poet William Wordsworth lived from 1813 till his death in 1850 and where he wrote many of his poems. The impressive house, which dates to the 16th century, is now owned by descendants of Wordsworth and retains the feel of a lived-in family home with a selection of the family's prized possessions and portraits. It has been enlarged over the intervening centuries, including by Wordsworth himself.

Wordsworth was also a keen landscape gardener and the beautiful 5-acre garden remains very much as he designed it, consisting of fell-side terraces, rock pools and an ancient mound. There are some wonderful views of surrounding hills and nearby Rydal Water. You can take an excellent guided tour of the house then wonder around other parts and the gardens yourself. There is a charge for access to the house and gardens with an adjacent tea room for refreshments. Open daily, except Fridays, from February to December. Closed January. Admission fee applies, tea room and toilets also available.

A short distance back down the access lane is the historic [Rydal Hall](#) which is now a Christian conference centre. You are free to wonder around the lovely gardens (donation box included) and there is a cafe, open daily all year. Further down the lane is [St Mary's Church](#) which has a pleasant churchyard and behind that is Dora's field which was owned by the Wordsworth's and is a mass of daffodils and then bluebells in

the spring. Next to Dora's field on the main A591 is [The Badger Bar](#), serving more substantial refreshments and where you can actually see badgers in the gardens and on the local [webcam](#).

Across the road from the pub is a footpath over the River Rothay which soon meets the attractive shores of Rydal Water. The popular footpath leads on to Grasmere lake and village. A good higher level footpath also leads towards Grasmere from behind Rydal Mount.

Buses stop on the main A591 at the bottom of the steep access lane, approx 250m walk up hill to Rydal Mount.

### Travelling:



A fabulous and relatively easy walk from Rydal village to Grasmere village along the shores of Rydal Water and Grasmere lake, surrounded by mountains and wonderful scenery. Take the footpath across the main A591 from the Badger Bar which immediately crosses the River Rothay. Follow the river upstream and soon meet the picturesque shores of Rydal Water. The well-worn but slightly rough path soon emerges from woodland to more open shingle shores where you can picnic and paddle. Beyond the small lake the footpath rises a little before descending to Grasmere lake with a good shingle beach and lovely views. [White Moss Common](#) is a short distance over the river where you can also catch a 599 or 555 bus. The footpath continues beyond the beach along Grasmere shore for a little over 0.5 miles before turning away from the lake and a small climb to the minor road above. Turn right and follow the minor road for almost 1 mile to Grasmere village.



Grasmere beach

Route	Rydal village to Grasmere village
Transport	Walking
Start	Badger Bar, Rydal village, LA22 9LR. <a href="http://lyricism.families.lightly">///lyricism.families.lightly</a>
End	Broadgate, Grasmere village, LA22 9SX. <a href="http://scanty.blaze.goodbye">///scanty.blaze.goodbye</a>
Duration	Walk is around 3 miles in length, around 1.5 hours.

Notes – To avoid the walk you can take the 599 or 555 bus the short distance from Rydal village to Grasmere village. 599 frequency; every 20 minutes Easter to November, every 60 minutes in winter. 555 frequency; hourly all year round, every 30 mins Monday to Saturday from July to September.

### Stop 4. Grasmere village.



Grasmere village

Grasmere is a picturesque and popular tourist village, on the shores of Grasmere lake and surrounded by high mountains in the very centre of the National Park. It was originally made famous by William Wordsworth who lived at a number of properties in the area and is buried at [St Oswald's Church](#) in the village alongside his wife Mary, sister Dorothy and 3 of his children. You can visit the graves and also wonder through the adjacent Wordsworth garden by the River Rothay which meanders past the village. Just outside the village on a small hill overlooking the lake is the imposing [Allan Bank](#) where



Wordsworth lived for a short time from 1808 to 1811. This is now a National Trust property and although mostly bare inside is still worth a visit along with the adjacent gardens.

Back in the village, adjacent to the church is the renowned [Grasmere Gingerbread shop](#), housed in the attractive old village school building which dates from 1630. Wordsworth taught at the school for a short time in 1812. The various other shops within the village are mostly tourist orientated and there are numerous cafes, restaurants and pubs. It is a popular centre for climbing mountains and there are some nice short [walks](#) alongside the river and to the lake where rowing boats can be hired.

The last Sunday in August brings the [Grasmere Sports](#) event to the adjacent fields. An annual event since 1868, you can see a host of local sporting events and activities, including fell running where humans race each other up and down the local fells, and hound trailing where dogs race each other along a scented trail across the fells. You can also see the unique local sport of Cumberland and Westmorland wrestling where competitors attempt to unbalance each other dressed in the traditional white long johns, white vest and colourful trunks.

Buses stop at a couple of locations through the village, including adjacent to the green in the village centre. Buses also stop outside nearby [Dove Cottage](#), another former home of William Wordsworth, and the adjacent Wordsworth Museum.



Dove Cottage

### Travelling:



Take the open top bus from Grasmere village, returning to Bowness-on-Windermere. You get a different perspective of the wonderful scenery in the opposite direction as you pass Grasmere and Rydal Water lakes, through Ambleside and Waterhead then along the shores of Windermere lake. You pass [Brockhole visitor centre](#) on the lake shore and continue to Windermere railway station before heading through [Windermere town](#) to Bowness-on-Windermere.



555 bus at Low Wood

Route	Grasmere village to Bowness-on-Windermere pier
Transport	599 open top bus (open top weather permitting)
Start	Broadgate, Grasmere village, LA22 9SX. <a href="#">///scanty.blaze.goodbye</a>
End	Bowness Pier, Bowness-on-Windermere, LA23 3HQ. <a href="#">///calculate.flame.earlobes</a>
Duration	45 minutes
Frequency	Every 20 minutes Easter to November. Every 60 minutes in winter.
Transport features	Open top (conditions permitting), USB charging, audio commentary and can take 2 bikes.

Notes – 599 bus travels via Windermere railway station. You can also catch a 555 bus from Grasmere to Windermere railway station. Frequency is hourly all year round, every 30 mins Monday to Saturday from July to September.

## 4. Example schedule

### Summer 2024

Location	Transport	Example times
Bowness-on-Windermere depart	Windermere red cruise	10:15
Waterhead (Ambleside) arrive	Windermere red cruise	10:45
Waterhead (Ambleside) depart	599 bus	12:16
Rydal village arrive	599 bus	12:31
Rydal village depart	Walking	~14:00
Grasmere village arrive	Walking	~15:30
Grasmere village depart	599 bus	16:45
Bowness-on-Windermere arrive	599 bus	17:30

### Winter 2023/24

Location	Transport	Example times
Bowness-on-Windermere depart	Windermere red cruise	10:00
Waterhead (Ambleside) arrive	Windermere red cruise	10:35
Waterhead (Ambleside) depart	599 bus	11:50
Rydal village arrive	599 bus	12:05
Rydal village depart	Walking	~13:30
Grasmere village arrive	Walking	~15:00
Grasmere village depart	599 bus	15:30
Bowness-on-Windermere arrive	599 bus	16:18

## 5. Ticket information

### Summer 2024

Combined bus & boat tickets can be bought on the bus or at the boat and include all day bus travel in [Central Lakes zone](#) plus a single Windermere boat cruise. This ticket covers all this itinerary;

### [Bus & Boat Ticket \(Central Lakes Zone\)](#)

Adults £16.00, Children & Concessions £10.50, Family £44.00 (5 people, max 2 adults)

## 6. Timetables & Connections

- Timetables for transport used in itinerary; [Stagecoach buses](#) & [Windermere Lake Cruises](#)
- Public transport connections to itinerary route;

### **Bowness-on-Windermere**

Numerous bus and boat connections. Windermere railway station is approx 1.5 miles away, bus or walk.

### **Grasmere**

555 bus from Keswick.

Further details of these connections [here](#).