

WELLBEING TRAVEL

Walking in style

Experience autumn's kaleidoscope of colour with walks through beautiful and unspoilt countryside, plus cosy, luxurious lodgings to slip off muddy boots and rest your head. By Charlotte Tottenham.



The Huts in the Hills, near Hay-on-Wye

Hut hideaway, South Wales

Brecon Beacons National Park is famous for the twin summits of Pen y Fan and Corn Du, which certainly promise a challenging and exhilarating hike. But there are also peaceful sun-dappled woods, cascading waterfalls and rolling hills to explore. A one-day walk starts at Crickhowell and takes in a towpath, mossy fairy woodland, gently sloping hills dotted with sheep, views of sheer granite cliffs and a vast cave with ceilings some ten-metres high, before winding along an old tramroad and descending back to

the start. The national park can organise guided walks and also offers canoeing, abseiling, bird-watching, horse-riding and all sorts of other activities.

For accommodation that keeps you in the great outdoors, The Huts in the Hills is a group of shepherd's huts in a tree-lined clearing near Hay-on-Wye, on the fringes of the national park. Each of its three huts has a double bed, wood-burning stove and power provided by a wind turbine and solar panels.

breconbeacons.org
thehutsinthehills.co.uk



Monachyle
Mhor, Loch Voil

Aim high, West Scotland

Ideal for a week away, Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park is home to some of the highest peaks in the UK. Hike to the summit of 1,130m (3,707ft) Ben Lui or follow more leisurely, flatter trails along lochs and coursing rivers, with just the Highland cows for company. The national park authorities can recommend walks of varying length and difficulty, and arrange for guides as well. For longer trails, the Three Lochs Way route shows off the beauty of the park

and ends on the oak tree-lined shores of Loch Lomond, where you may spot otters hunting or a native red squirrel. By night, curl up next to a roaring fire at family-run farmhouse hotel, Monachyle Mhor, on the banks of Loch Voil. Retire to one of its stunningly restored rooms – each of which has been designed individually using local stone and slate, and some of which can even accommodate canine guests.

lochlomond-trossachs.org
mhor.net



Recharge
in the Lake
District

Rest and revive, Cumbria

If the idea of a day walking in the sublime rolling hills of the Lake District, followed by yoga at dusk and a massage appeals, then a stay at Sunny Brow Farm near Outgate may be exactly what's needed. Its self-catered cottages are nestled in the woodland of a 33-acre

estate and are all cosy but well-equipped barn conversions, ideally located for day hikes. Walk up to the viewpoint of Esthwaite Water, or wander further afield to the banks of the iconic Lake Windermere and gaze out at the sailing boats as they tack back and forth.

The farm has a focus on holistic wellbeing and offers retreat packages that include Reiki, yoga and wholefood cuisine, but it can also plan bespoke trips. These are available Monday to Friday or Friday to Monday for a long weekend, and events include everything from a dance weekend to woodland activities and foraging.

visitcumbria.com
sunnybrowfarm.co.uk





St Michael's
Mount,
Cornwall

Go the distance, Cornwall, Dorset and Devon

The 630 miles (1,014km) of England's South West Coast Path has some of the most superb coastline in the country, challenging in places but with spectacular and rewarding views. Walkers can opt for any leg of the route and the South West Coast Path website has a number of recommendations from which to pick, including guided walks, longer trips, baggage carrying and the option to stay in one place but be shuttled to the start of your walk in the morning. St Ives to Falmouth is a particularly special stretch and follows the twisting seashore along craggy paths.

Load Off Your Back can organise an eight-day trip with accommodation in B&Bs, with anything from ten to 15 miles walked a day. The route passes coves, caverns, crashing waves, soaring seabirds, fishing villages and St Michael's Mount. For a magical evening on this journey, watch a show at the open-air Minack Theatre in Porthcurno (performances run until 1 October), where, perched on the cliffs above the Atlantic with the stage below you, you might even be lucky enough to see a pod of dolphins in the distance.

southwestcoastpath.org.uk
loadoffyourback.co.uk

Take to the trees, Hampshire

The spacious Tree Houses at Chewton Glen in New Milton make the perfect launch pad for a family-friendly weekend of walking in the New Forest – and surely fulfil many a childhood dream. Added to the treats are a daily breakfast hamper delivery, which appears through a secret hatch, and a hot tub on the deck for stargazing. Wend your way along the easy-going terrain of the New Forest, passing wild horses and tiny, quintessentially British hamlets. Days out from here will keep all ages happy – children can learn about the history of the woodland, which was used by William the Conqueror for hunting, or enjoy a visit to the National Motor Museum at Beaulieu in the heart of the national park.

The forest area is well-served with pubs and restaurants, including the scrumptious Hartnett

Holder & Co at Lime Wood Hotel in Lyndhurst, overseen by award-winning chef Angela Hartnett, and The Pig in Brockenhurst, where the menu is dictated by its abundant kitchen garden and locally-foraged ingredients.

chewtonglen.com
newforestnpa.gov.uk



A heavenly
escape at
Chewton Glen

Photograph top left: David Chapman