

The Three Hostels Three Peaks Walk

Day 1. Stainforth to Ingleton 13.5miles 21 km

Leaving Stainforth and the B6479 behind, the route takes a shady lane to Little Stainforth. Just before the hamlet is reached there is a small food store serving the nearby caravan site. On climbing the stile at the top of the lane a fine stretch of open country follows and one can feel the walk has really begun.

On reaching the hamlet of Feizor where a house sells ice cream and soft drinks, the route then heads through the valley crossing a series of small fields to reach Austwick. The village has a good food store and pub. Another series of fields is again crossed to reach Clapham. This attractive "honey-pot" of a village caters well for the visitor and makes the ideal lunch stop.

From Clapham there is a choice, the main route passing through the private estate for which there is a small charge, the latter taking the parallel Long Lane. Shortly after the two routes rejoin, Ingleborough Cave is reached. There is a small cafe and the cave is well worth a visit if time allows.

Trow Gill is the next point of interest, where there is a climb between the cliffs to a narrow track, after a short distance a stile is climbed onto open moorland, from here the steady climb to the top of Ingleborough begins in earnest.

Both on the ascent and fairly easy descent to Ingleton, fine views can be enjoyed for most of the way.

Ingleton, the only town on route, has a good selection of cafes, pubs, late opening food store and regular bus connections.

Day 2. Ingleton to Dentdale 11.5 miles 18.5km

Though the shortest of the three days this is not the easiest! The walk starts by following part of the famous waterfalls trail, the scenery on this section is spectacular but there is a small charge as this is not a public right of way.

At about the halfway point of the trail, our route leaves to climb away from the lane up onto open moorland, with fine views of Ingleborough on the right and Whernside ahead. The track is poor in places but you cannot go too far wrong if you keep heading for the big hills in front of you. In poor weather use the lane to Chapel-le-Dale. On reaching the line of trees, the route joins a track first through Ellerbeck Farm, then along the valley to Bruntscar.

Shortly beyond the point where the track turns right, our route turns left through a gate to leave the valley and start the climb up to Whernside. This is the steepest climb of the three days, only made a little easier by the recently introduced steps. When finally reached, the summit is a bit of a disappointment though there are plenty of fine views and the descent to Smithy Hill is an easy one.

At the point where both the track and stream cross the railway (an interesting engineering feature), our route leaves the main track to head north, first to cross a stile, then climbing past two vent shafts to Dent Head. The track is poor on this section. The track takes a steep descent on the other side, passing through a plantation which can be very boggy in places, but once into the open again the last mile (first past a waterfall then Dent Head Farm) makes for an easy end to the day.

Day 3. Dentdale to Stainforth 14.5miles 23km

After retracing the first half-mile the route continues on up the road to pass under the Dent Head Viaduct. On reaching the top of the hill, we leave the road at a gate to follow a track. Shortly before High Gayle Farm the route branches right to go round the back of the farms; there are some fine views of the hills to be crossed ahead. After a short walk along the B6255 the route leaves the road at Gearstone Lodge crossing a field to reach a stream with footbridge. This is an ideal spot for a rest in good weather.

From here a wall is followed round to a deserted farm where the Ribble Way is joined and a series of large fields is crossed to reach Nether Lodge. Once through the farm a rough track is followed first to God's Bridge, where a cave can be visited with a short detour, then onto the next gate. At this point a lane leads off to Horton. The main route continues over a small hill to join a lane. A short way after a stile is crossed the track bears to the left, but our route heads straight on over open ground. The track is poorly defined from here till a stile in a wall is reached. At the following stile the Pennine Way National Trail is crossed, which can also be used to reach Horton. From here the route climbs steadily over the moors towards Pen-y-Ghent. This section can be quite boggy in wet weather. Approaching from this direction makes for a fairly easy climb, the descent from Pen-y-Ghent in contrast is a steep one with steps on the worst bit, but once the stile to the track to Horton is reached the ground levels out for the next two miles before the final scenic descent into Stainforth.