

Everything STOPS FOR TEA

Nothing improves a walk like a great café. Here are our six top spots to refuel, where both food and views will make you go 'Mmmmm'.

WORDS: JENNY WALTERS



2 HEYDON VILLAGE TEA SHOP, Norfolk

www.heydonvillageteashop.co.uk, 01263 587211

Walking into Heydon is like stumbling back 100 years into an idyll of Englishness, where ivy-clad cottages congregate around a village green. Heydon lies at the end of a cul-de-sac lane in the tranquil reaches of inland Norfolk, and it's owned by an estate that has preserved its charms – so much so that it's regularly used for filming period dramas like *The Moonstone* (and Monty Python's village idiot sketch). And that quaintness continues inside the village tea shop with its lace tablecloths, where owners Cindy and Karl serve light lunches, cream teas and an array of scrumptious home-baked classics like fruit cake or coffee and walnut cake – or try rhubarb and custard cake, apricot and fig scones, caramel flapjack or Wimbledon cake (pictured).

WALK HERE: Stroll the parkland of Heydon Hall, or try a seven-mile loop south by Watery, Merrison's and Kerdygreen Lanes and past Manor Farm to Reepham, and then back on paths and tiny roads via Salle.



1 LOWTHER TEA ROOM, Sandwick, Cumbria

www.becksidefarm.co.uk/cafe, 01768 486996

Like a mirage in a desert, the Lowther Tea Room is the stuff that weary walkers dream of, appearing as if by magic on a remote fellside path on the eastern shore of Ullswater. For decades it was a tumbledown barn, but it's been fully restored and converted into a cosy tearoom that makes a perfect refuelling spot on a loop over Place Fell from Patterdale or for those walking the lakeside path from Howtown. There's outside seating too, so you can relish the panorama across the lake over lunch, with a huge pot of tea and home-baked scones, flapjacks and tiffins.

WALK HERE: Download your seven-mile walk over Place Fell for free at www.lfto.com/cwroutes – the tea room is at point 5.



3 THE HIDDEN HUT, Porthscatho, Cornwall

www.hiddenhut.co.uk, (no phone or mobile at hut)

Perched above the sands of Porthcurnick Beach on the Roseland Peninsula, the Hidden Hut can only be reached on foot. This seaside café has been refreshing walkers for 70 years but it became something really special when local couple Simon and Gemma took over. Now your pit stop might include soups like split pea and local smoked ham hock, sandwiches like blue cheese and prosciutto wraps, and cakes like rocky road or lemon drizzle baked by Gemma's mum, Maggie. There are picnic benches or you can sit on the beach, with the South West Coast Path beckoning you along the shore to Nare Head to burn it all off.

WALK HERE: For an eight-mile walk from Porthscatho, follow the SWCP to the Hidden Hut and on around the bay to Nare Head, and back the same way.



4 THE PIER CAFE, Stronachlachar, Stirling

www.thepiercafe.com, 01877 386374

You can reach this café on Loch Katrine by four wheels, two feet or a boat. Our vote goes with two feet, and in particular the 13-mile walk around the north shore of the loch, taking in a glorious succession of water, island and mountain vistas, before arriving at the tempting view of the Pier Cafe's cake display. There are tasty savouries too like goat's cheese panini and lasagne, but leave ample room for those

bakes – choc chip shortbread, raspberry and coconut loaf, fresh cream meringues... And try to get a seat in the conservatory with its view of a loch that was both the birthplace of Rob Roy and the setting for Sir Walter Scott's *Lady of the Lake*.

WALK HERE: Follow path from the east tip of Loch Katrine, along the north shore and round the west end to reach the tea room and the (seasonal) steamer back to start.



5 PENCEUNANT TEA HOUSE, Llanberis, Gwynedd

www.snowdoncafe.com, 01286 872606

This 18th-century cottage sits in a spectacular spot at the foot of one of the most popular walks in Britain – Snowdon's Llanberis Path – and it's a place of comfy settees and antique dressers, all presided over by owner Steffan. The food is limited but superb – think home-baked bara brith, Welsh cakes, and toasted teacakes, plus hot and cold drinks that include wine, beer and a proper hot chocolate. And Steffan doesn't mind if you eat your own sandwiches – it's all part of

his famed hospitality, that also includes stoking fires to warm chilly walkers, providing towels for drenched ones, and even ordering taxis for those who can't face the last few yards into Llanberis. Impossible to fault which is why it's twice been voted the best restaurant in Wales, and it's open every day including Christmas.

WALK HERE: Refuel at Penceunant at the end of a 13½-mile walk over Moel Eilio and Snowdon – download the route at www.lfto.com/cwroutes



6 GARDEN TEA ROOM, Over Haddon, Derbs

01629 810595

On a sunny day there can be few more perfect spots in the Peaks than this tea room terrace, looking across Lathkill Dale while sipping a mug of coffee and nibbling – well, scoffing – an irresistible slab or two of home-made cake. Owned by Mark and Karen, it's worth every step of the climb up the hill from the banks of the Lathkill as it glitters through the limestone dale, to sample sweet treats like treacle tart, Bakewell tart or lemon drizzle cake, which many rate as the best they've tasted. The seating is all outside so it's one for a dry day, but as reader Ian Stephens says: 'This place takes some beating.'

WALK HERE: Download your seven-mile Lathkill Dale walk at www.lfto.com/cwroutes. The café is a short way off-route in Over Haddon.



Your top picks...

“ No walk near Ambleside is complete without a trip to The Apple Pie Bakery! Epic Bath buns, flaky Eccles cakes and melt-in-the-mouth apple pie. Worth every single calorie! ”

Lizzie Hughes

“ A walk isn't a walk without cake! My favourite stops are: The Schoolhouse, Hebden; The Singing Kettle, Settle; Elaine's, Feizor; and for bacon butties, Bernies at Ingleton. ”

Jane Cordingley

“ One of our best surprises was a mobile van – Hushwing Café – by Holkham Beach. Lovely hot choccy with a pecan and toffee brownie to die for! ”

Ian Stephens

“ I like the Lord Stones café at the bottom of Carlton Bank on the North York Moors. The bacon butties take some beating. ”

Peter Partington

“ Definitely try Tintern Old Railway Station, in the Wye Valley! Best thing on the menu is the lavender cake. ”

Lesley Williams

“ The National Trust's Buscot Park in Oxfordshire does amazing carrot cake! ”

Jane Gleghorn

“ I love the Ramblers Retreat in the Churnet Valley. Famous for their lemon meringue pie! ”

Caroline Stimson

“ The fruit bread pudding at The Nature Discovery Centre in Thatcham is really good. Doesn't stay on the plate long! ”

Niki Babington