Walla Crag walk from Great Wood, Keswick

Visited Saturday 21 November 2026 · The Lakes Planner

Last updated 23 November 2026. Check for a newer version before you go: https://www.thelakesplanner.co.uk/fells/walla-crag/

///spokes.spotted.forensic

what3words, Great Wood car park

Height	379 m · 1,243 ft
Our loop	5.86 km / about 3.6 mi
Ascent	311 m
Our time	2 hr 17 min with stops · just under 2 hr moving
Start	Great Wood car park (National Trust)
Direction	Anticlockwise, down beside Cat Gill
Dogs	On a lead (National Trust)
Facilities	None on the route
Classification	Wainwright · Central Fells

Check the fell conditions before you set off: Lake District Weatherline, https://lakedistrict.gov.uk/explore/plan-your-visit/lake-district-weather/

STEP BY STEP

Our route up Walla Crag from Great Wood

Peter, Ellie and Cass walked this on Saturday 21 November 2026, leaving the car park at 13:51 and getting back at 16:08: **5.86 km, 311 m of ascent, 306 m of descent.** We went anticlockwise, up the gentle Castlerigg side and down the steep path beside Cat Gill. If you'd rather go up the steep side, see which way round to walk it.

1 Leave Great Wood car park on the path

From the car park, which has room for about 60 cars, head out on the path.



Great Wood car park.



The car park end of Great Wood, at the finish.

2 The first fingerpost: go left

About 100 m along there's a fingerpost. Walla Crag is 2 miles and 2 hr 10 min to the **left**. Ashness Bridge is 55 minutes to the right, and a third arm mentions a more gradual climb at 2 hr 20 min. **Go left.**

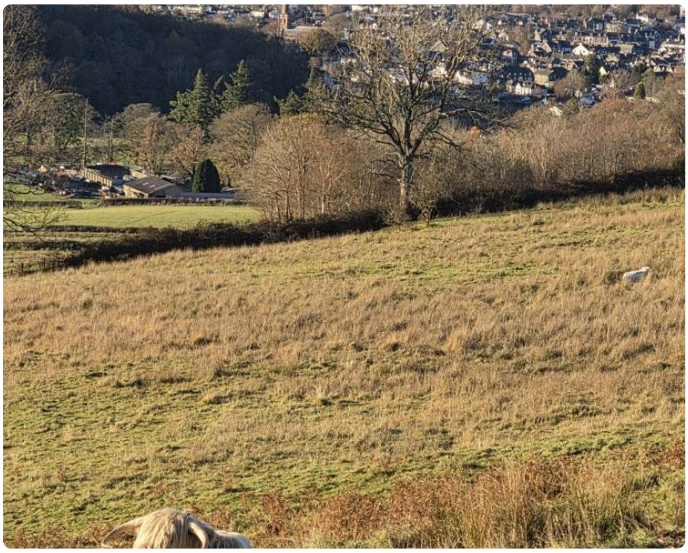


The first fingerpost: Walla Crag left, Ashness Bridge right.


The path through Great Wood, Cass on the lead.

3 Turn right at the T-junction

The path bends left and comes to a T-junction. **Turn right.**


A field on the way up, with a Highland cow.


A wooded crag face along the way.

4 The Castlerigg fingerpost: go right

At the next junction a fingerpost shows Castlerigg ⅓ mile and Walla Crag 1 mile to the **right**, Keswick town centre 2 miles to the left, and Great Wood back the way you came. You could walk into Keswick from here instead. **For Walla Crag, go right.**



The Castlerigg fingerpost: Walla Crag 1 mile to the right.


A bench and a stile on the way up.

5 Over the small bridge and up to the road

Cross a small bridge and go up to the road, looking towards Walla Crag.


Looking towards Walla Crag from the fields.

6 At the road junction, go right

At the junction, the road on the left is private and goes to properties. **Walla Crag is signposted right.**

7 Cross the footbridge and take the steeper right-hand path

About 50 yards up the road, cross the footbridge. After it there seem to be two paths. **Take the right-hand one, the steeper of the two.**



The beck in the woods near the footbridge.

8 Up the open fellside beside the wall

Now you're on open fellside, following a wall, and the views open out behind you. On our day there was frost all over the path.



The frosty path beside the wall.



Frost and the wall, with the views opening out.



The view back on the way up.



The view through the larches.

9 The gate on the right near the top

Near the top there's a gate on the right. Go through it and you come out on the edge, with excellent views over the lake.



Through the gate: the edge and the lake, with Cass in the corner of the frame.

Take care beyond the gate

A short way along, the path bends with a drop beside it. On our day there was ice on the rocks and a large rock in the way. With Cass pulling on the lead, we turned back.

A short way through the gate there's a safe spot to take in the views. Stop there, then come back to the gate. Only go on past the bend in good weather, and only if you're steady on your feet. It isn't the safest way, and it isn't the way to the summit in ice or wet. For that, see step 10.

Check the fell conditions before you set off on the Lake District Weatherline.



The icy bend where we turned back.



The gate, with Cass on the lead.

10 To the summit, the safe way

Back at the gate, keep walking with the gate on your **right**, along its left-hand side. About 150 m on there's another stile. Cross it and you're at the summit.

THE SUMMIT

The top of Walla Crag

We reached the summit at about 15:14. From the rocks at the top you look out over Derwentwater. The height is 379 m on the current OS map, and you'll find more on that number in the Wainwright story below.



The summit rocks, with Cass.



Cass at the summit, over Derwentwater.

CHOOSE YOUR WAY DOWN

Three ways down from the top

We came down beside Cat Gill, the steepest way off. That descent shouldn't put you off the walk. There are safer ways down, so pick the one that suits the weather and the people (and dog) you're with.

1. Back the way you came up

Retrace your steps down the Castlerigg and Rakefoot side. It's gentle and easy to follow, though longer. This is the safest choice in ice or wet, with a dog, or if you're unsure on steep ground.

2. Over Falcon Crag towards Ashness Bridge

From the first stile on the way down (step 11), you can see the path heading up and over Falcon Crag. It's easier to follow than the way we went, and it's the way the AllTrails "Walla Crag Circular" goes. We didn't walk it, but we'd expect the views over Derwentwater from Falcon Crag to be better than on the shorter route. The National Trust describes a route this way in its Walla Crag to Ashness Bridge walk.

3. Beside Cat Gill, the way we went

The shortest way down, but steep, rocky and stepped. Not with a dog or in poor weather, and you need to be able-bodied. Step 12 covers it.

The first two ways each add a few kilometres to the walk.

11 Off the top: the stile, and the open way down

About 30 yards on from the summit there's a stile. Going right here takes you down through the woods. For the views, cross the stile and go down this side of the fell, an open, grassy walk.



The stile off the top.

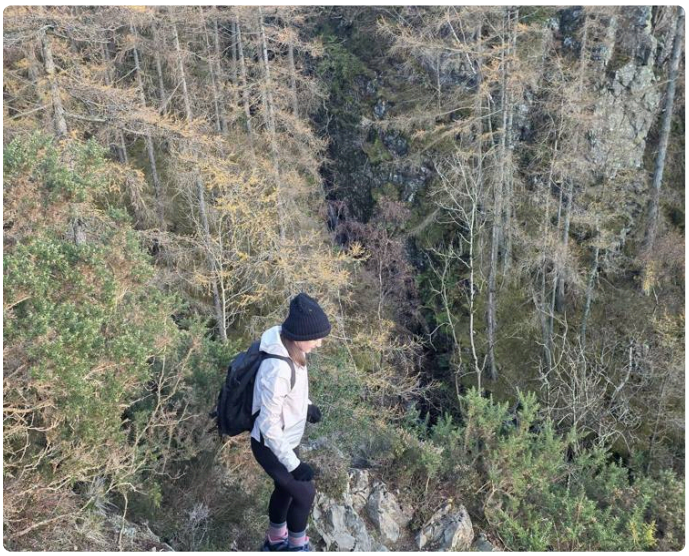


Coming down at sunset.

12 The descent beside Cat Gill

South of the summit, the path drops down beside Cat Gill, the stream that forms the southern edge of the fell and separates Walla Crag from Falcon Crag. It's steep, rocky and stepped, above the deep cut of the gill. At the bottom, the path takes you back through Great Wood to the car park. We were back at 16:08.

> **Not for the faint-hearted**
>
> Coming down beside Cat Gill was harsh. Don't do it with a dog or in poor weather, and you need to be fit and steady on your feet. If that doesn't fit the day, choose another way down: back the way you came up, or over Falcon Crag towards Ashness Bridge. Both are covered in three ways down from the top. You can also walk the loop the other way round, up beside Cat Gill (see which way round).
>
> Check the fell conditions first on the Lake District Weatherline.



Ellie on the rocky descent beside Cat Gill, the gill's deep cut behind.



Derwentwater through the trees on the way down.