

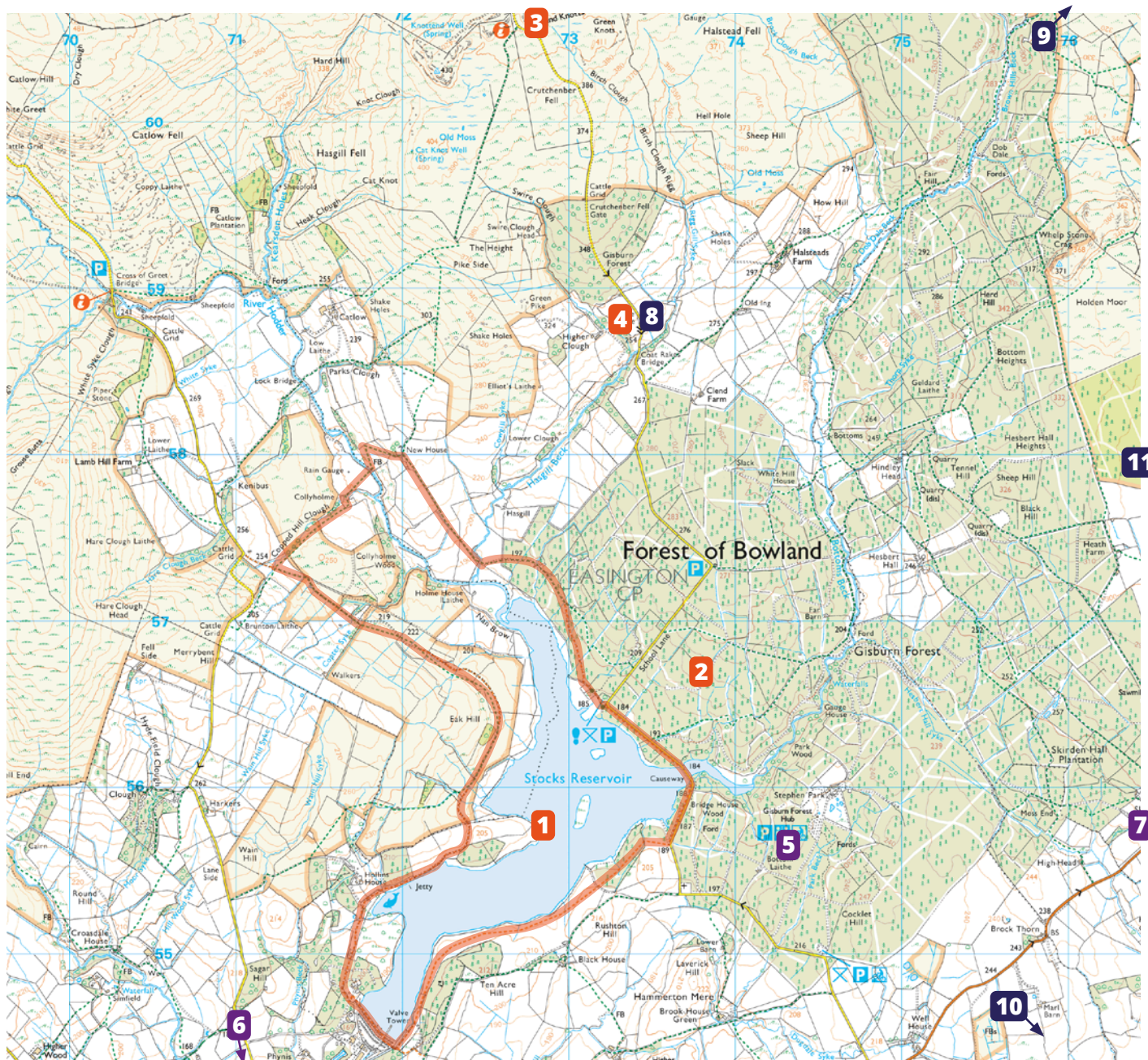


## ITINERARY 11

### GISBURN FOREST AND STOCKS RESERVOIR ADVENTURE



In the hills above the picturesque village of Slaidburn there's a paradise for outdoor enthusiasts just waiting to be explored. This pristine upland landscape in Lancashire's undiscovered rural hinterland is a hidden gem with more in common with the lochs and glens of the Scottish Highlands than the post-industrial mill towns in the south of the county.



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## DAY 1

### WALK AROUND STOCKS RESERVOIR

Lace up your boots to take on the eight-mile Stocks Reservoir Circular route climbs into the hills above the reservoir, providing expansive views of the wider Bowland landscape before descending to complete a circuit of the entire reservoir.

[www.forestofbowland.com/walking#47400863](http://www.forestofbowland.com/walking#47400863)

Start from the pay and display car park on the eastern shore of the reservoir and allow at least three hours to complete the entire circuit. Head to the wildlife watching hides on the eastern shoreline to watch the amazing birdlife that lives on and around the reservoir. Look out for geese, ducks, waders and even the occasional migrating osprey in spring and autumn.

#### Lunch

Make a detour to [Gisburn Forest Hub Café](#) for a wide range of snacks, light meals and refreshments – including ice creams and splendid home-made cakes. In the summer months, look out for wildflowers in the restored meadow at Stephen Park, where you'll see an abundance of species that are often absent from more intensively farmed grassland – including rare orchids.

#### Evening

Return to the car park at Gisburn Forest Hub as night falls to explore the Forest of Bowland's sparkling night skies. Gisburn Forest is an official Dark Sky Discovery site where celestial objects are brighter and easier to see thanks to reduced light pollution.

Look out for bright twinkling stars, planets, constellations and galaxies – including our own Milky Way, which arcs across the night sky from southeast to southwest.

## DAY 2

### GISBURN FOREST MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS

For a two-wheeled adventure off-road, the purpose-built cycle trails through [Gisburn Forest](#) offer rides of varying length to suit all abilities from beginner to expert. Refreshments and bike hire is available at the Gisburn Forest Hub – just a short ride from the pay and display car park.

In addition to long distance touring routes, the Forest Hub near is your base for more than 30km of forest trails and tracks designed specifically for mountain bikers.

The basic skills loop is ideal for beginners looking to hone their bike-handling skills before tackling the more ambitious 9.5km (5.5 miles) Bottoms Beck Trail which includes steep curvy descents and a scenic riverside ascent.

More accomplished riders can test themselves on a more demanding 18km (11 miles) double loop known as 'The 8' with optional Black routes to spice things up still further. Ride to the highest point in Gisburn Forest for outstanding views from the lofty perch of Whelpstone Crag – the perfect place for a picnic.

#### Lunch

Head back to the Forest Hub Café for refreshments or venture further afield to the Hark to Bounty Inn or Riverside Tea Rooms at Slaidburn (4 miles away) or The Old Vicarage Tea Rooms at Tosside (2 miles away).

#### Evening

For a lovely short evening walk, take a wander up to the rugged outcrops of Bowland Knotts high above Stocks Reservoir. The panoramic views from this craggy ridgeline extend right across the Forest of Bowland and into the limestone country of the Dales, where the Yorkshire Three Peaks are prominent away to the north-east.

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## OTHER OPTIONS

Get up with the lark and fish for plump and tasty trout in the clear waters of Stocks Reservoir – the closest you'll come to fishing a wild Scottish loch – outside Scotland! The Prince Albert Angling Society controls the fishing, visit their website to check whether the trout are biting: <https://paas.co.uk/waters/>

## ACCESS FOR ALL

Lovers of the outdoors with mobility issues can also enjoy the wonderful scenery of Stocks Reservoir and Gisburn Forest on an easy access [Tramper Trail](#). The Tramper is a specially designed four-wheel drive all-terrain electric buggy, which can be used off road and even on rough ground, mud and grass. The Bowland Tramper can be booked in advance from Gisburn Forest Hub. Call 01200 446387 or email [gisburncafe@outlook.com](mailto:gisburncafe@outlook.com) to make a reservation.

<https://www.forestofbowland.com/walking#47400842>

## SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT OPTIONS

There's no public transport to Stocks Reservoir, but it is within an hour's bike ride of the following stations: Bentham (13 miles), Long Preston (9 miles) and Clitheroe (12 miles). Check timetables at [www.northernrailway.co.uk](http://www.northernrailway.co.uk). Cycle reservations recommended.

## LINGER LONGER

There's plenty more to see and do in the area to extend your break a while. The entire Forest of Bowland AONB is criss-crossed with footpaths and cycle trails. Picturesque villages like Slaidburn, Chipping, Waddington and Wray are within just an hour or so in the saddle, while the towns of Clitheroe and Bentham have more shops and entertainment to offer and are linked with good onward public transport connections. [Click here for more ideas and itineraries.](#)

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# DISCOVER

## 1 Stocks Reservoir

Discover a little slice of the Scottish highlands in Bowland. Walk around the scenic reservoir and keep an eye open for the rich birdlife making its home there.

## 2 Gisburn Forest

Take a deep dive into the dense woodland of Lancashire's largest tract of forestry. Ride miles of traffic-free trails or walk to the highpoint of Whelpstone Crag for outstanding views. [www.forestryengland.uk/gisburn-forest-and-stocks](http://www.forestryengland.uk/gisburn-forest-and-stocks)

## 3 Bowland Knotts

Visit the rugged outcrops of one of the highest points in the Forest of Bowland in Gisburn Forest with panoramic views from the trig point.

## 4 Dark Skies Stargazing

[www.forestofbowland.com/star-gazing](http://www.forestofbowland.com/star-gazing)



# EAT

## 5 Gisburn Forest Hub

A friendly café within the Forest itself, offering a wide range of snacks, light meals and refreshments – including ice creams and splendid home-made cakes. [gisburnforesthub.uk/cafe/](http://gisburnforesthub.uk/cafe/)

## 6 Hark to Bounty

Characterful village inn with accommodation in the pretty village of Slaidburn. [www.harktobounty.co.uk/](http://www.harktobounty.co.uk/)

## 7 Old Vicarage Tearooms

A unique eatery perched high between the Ribble and Hodder Valleys and very popular with hungry cyclists looking to refuel before continuing their rides. 07809 489282

# STAY



## 6 The Hark to Bounty Inn

Characterful village inn with accommodation in the pretty village of Slaidburn. [www.harktobounty.co.uk/](http://www.harktobounty.co.uk/)

## 8 Dale House B&B

An outstanding boutique B&B with bunk barn run by a very cycle-friendly proprietor. Green tourism Gold Award Winner. [discoverbowland.uk/Business/dale-house-barn-and-b-and-b/](http://discoverbowland.uk/Business/dale-house-barn-and-b-and-b/)

## 9 The Traddock

An upmarket county house hotel in the beautiful stone village of Austwick. Outstanding hospitality in a beautiful setting. [discoverbowland.uk/Business/the-traddock/](http://discoverbowland.uk/Business/the-traddock/)

## 10 The Coach and Horses

The Coach and Horses is ideally located for exploration of the Forest of Bowland, Pendle Hill and Gisburn Forest, with miles of public footpaths on the doorstep. [discoverbowland.uk/Business/coach-and-horses/](http://discoverbowland.uk/Business/coach-and-horses/)

**11 Peaks and Pods** Extend your stay in luxurious glamping pod, complete with hot tub with magnificent views. <https://www.discoverbowland.uk/Business/peaks-and-pods/>