



ITINERARY 7 A BIKE-PACKING TOUR OF BOWLAND

The quiet country lanes of the Forest of Bowland have made it a popular destination for touring cyclists for decades. This 300 square mile Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is criss-crossed by a network of rural routes and bounded by National Cycle Network Routes 68, 69 and 90.

This 110-mile Bikepacking tour of Bowland takes in the scenic highlights of the Forest of Bowland and visits many of the towns and villages in a meandering three-day tour of the region.

Bowland's hilly terrain presents a challenge to even the fittest of cyclists, and e-bikes are becoming an increasingly popular way to explore the area. Starting at Lancaster station and finishing at Clapham station, this relaxed itinerary averages 36 miles a day, leaving plenty of time to stop off and explore towns and villages along the route.



Day 1: Lancaster to Dolphinholme 69km

Day 2: Dolphinholme to Waddington 63km (132km)

Day 3: Waddington to Clapham Station 46km (178km)

DAY 1

Arrival

Arrive at Lancaster by train. Regular train connections from the East and West Coast mainlines, at Leeds and Lancaster. For timetables visit the Northern website www.northernrailway.co.uk

From the station, take the opportunity to explore the castle before meandering down to the south bank of the Lune and following the cycle path upstream to Crook of Lune. The cycle path merges with the busy A683 at Caton, but leave the main road at Farleton and head into the pretty village of Wray.

Lunch

Sit beside the River Roeburn and enjoy a light lunch at the Bridge House Tea Rooms and continue on National Cycle Route 69 to the tiny hamlet of Lowgill, climbing steadily past the Great Stone of Fourstones up to the pass at Cross of Greet at 427m above sea level.

Descend alongside the headwaters of the River Hodder through this beautiful valley before climbing steeply above Stocks Reservoir and descending into the pretty village of Slaidburn.

Stock up on provisions at Slaidburn Central Stores or grab a coffee at the Riverbank Tea Rooms and head southwest through Newton to Dunsop Bridge – gateway to the Trough of Bowland. Climb through Hareden and onwards to the steep haul above Sykes followed by a glorious descent alongside the Marshaw branch of the River Wyre through the Trough of Bowland. At Marshaw, take the fell road skirting Hawthornthwaite Fell and follow this through the pastureland of the upper Wyre Valley to Dolphinholme. Continue through the village to the Fleece Inn for your overnight accommodation.

DAY 2

From The Fleece, follow the lane back over the River Wyre at Street, climbing over the shoulder of Harris End Fell and enjoying the expansive views out over Morecambe Bay. Beyond Calder Vale and Oakenclough, continue on quiet country lanes to the village of Chipping, where there are several opportunities to refuel.

Lunch

Purchase a picnic from the Chipping Farm Shop or head to one of the cafes in the village or sustenance.

Afternoon

Head for the steep scarp of Longridge Fell and a sharp climb up Jeffrey Hill for outstanding vistas over the Bowland Fells from the viewpoint. Contour along the southern flank of the ridge before descending past historic Stonyhurst College and onwards to the Roman town of Ribchester.

Roman Ribchester

In Roman Times, the River Ribble was navigable as far upstream as Ribchester – as evidenced by the Roman wharf which remains visible near the Roman museum on the waterfront.

Continue up the Ribble Valley to Whalley, where there are several cafes and bars to sample before heading back out onto the country lanes to take the scenic route to the pretty village of Waddington.

Evening

Stay in Waddington and enjoy the surprisingly lively nightlife of this bustling little village.

DAY 3

Ride across the River Ribble and spend a couple of hours exploring Clitheroe – complete with a Norman castle and a wide range of specialist independent retailers with the focus firmly on local produce.

From Clitheroe, continue up the valley through Chatburn to the unspoiled village of Downham – the backdrop for classic B&W film *Whistle Down the Wind* and more recently BBC drama *Born and Bred*.

Continue on the quiet lanes winding among the foothills of imposing Pendle Hill before descending into the village of Gisburn, where you'll find an excellent deli and rather good Italian restaurant.

Cross the busy A59 and continue on country lanes to the pretty village of Bolton by Bowland and start the steady climb up to Tosside, with its popular cyclists café: the Old Vicarage Tea Rooms.

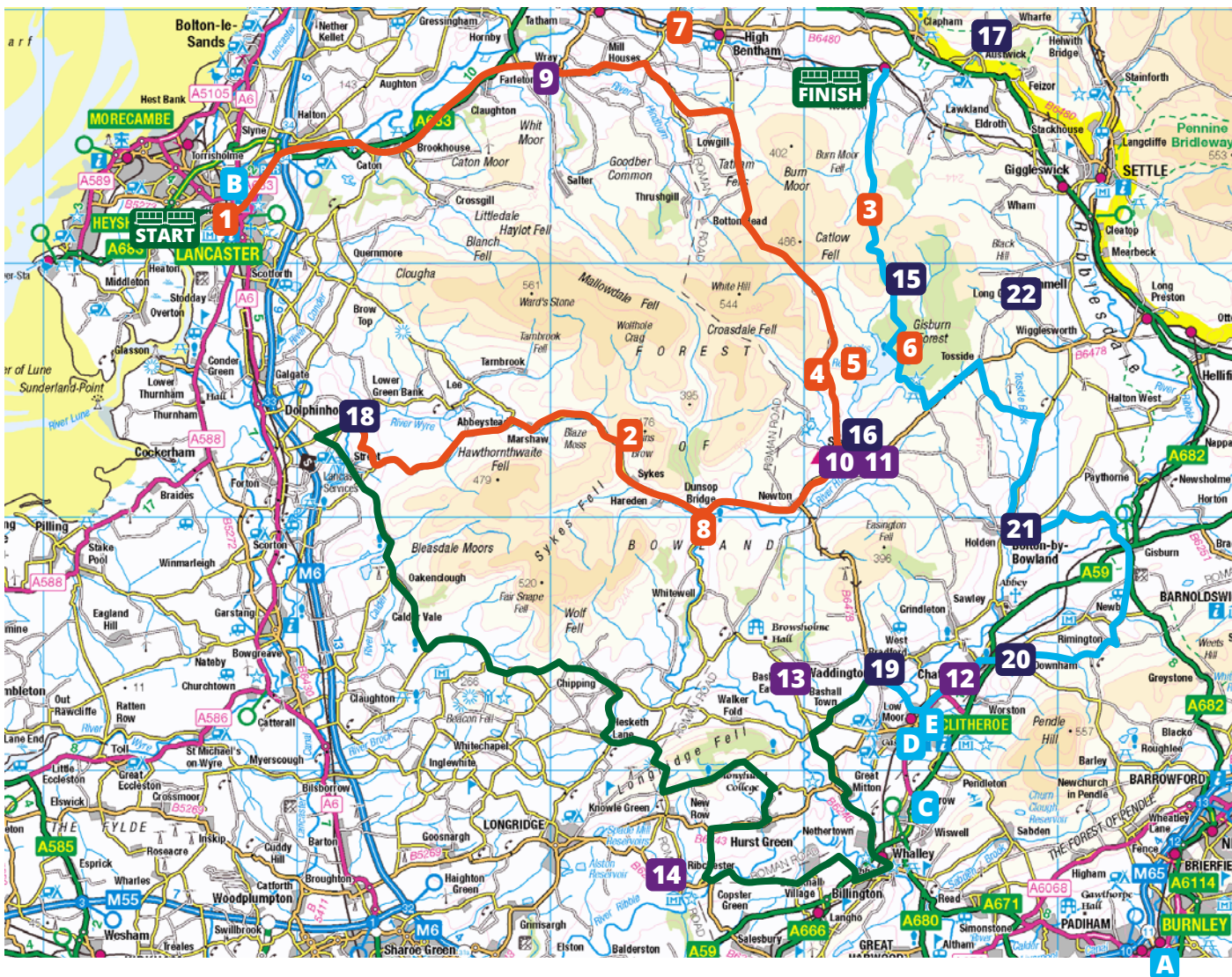
Lunch

Choose between Delicious deli, La Locanda, the Coach & Horses at Bolton by Bowland or the Old Vicarage Tearooms at Tosside.

Afternoon

Descend to Stocks Reservoir and follow the eastern shoreline across the causeway and begin the sustained and occasionally steep climb through Gisburn Forest to Bowland Knotts. Enjoy the dramatic views northeast over to the Yorkshire Three Peaks, the Howgill Fells and, on the northern horizon, the Lakeland Fells.

From Bowland Knotts, it's a long, steady descent through Keasden to Clapham station and a train back along the Bentham Line to your starting point in Lancaster.



Explore more...

Historic Lancaster has plenty of attractions for visitors – including the imposing castle itself. Download a free walking and cycling guide from [Visit Lancaster](http://visitlancaster.com).

Stocks Reservoir and Gisburn Forest are worth taking extra time to explore in more depth. The reservoir has wildlife hides dotted around its shoreline and is home to a wide variety of birdlife. Gisburn Forest is one of England's most popular mountain biking destinations with miles of challenging traffic-free forest tracks to explore.

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 towns and villages like Longridge, Whalley and Bentham are all worthy of exploration and are linked with good onward public transport connections.

<http://ecoescapes.org.uk/>



DISCOVER

- 1 Historic Lancaster** From a Roman fort to a pivotal royal residence and prominent trading port, explore the rich history and heritage of Lancashire's ancient county town. <https://visitlancaster.org.uk/>
- 2 The Trough of Bowland** Follow the ancient drover's route linking Lancaster with the market towns and rural villages of the scenic Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty <https://www.forestofbowland.com/towns-villages>
- 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 Cross of Greet** Explore the secluded Cross of Greet Valley leading up to another spectacular viewpoint offering stunning views of the Yorkshire Three Peaks and the distant Lakeland Fells.
- 5 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.
- 6 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. <https://www.forestryengland.uk/gisburn-forest-and-stocks>
- 7 The Bentham Line** Visit the pretty villages on this scenic railway linking the Lancashire coast and the Yorkshire Dales with plenty of pretty villages to explore en route. <https://thebenthamline.co.uk/>
- 8 Ribble Valley E-Bikes** Hire an electric bike to breeze effortlessly through the undulating terrain of the Forest of Bowland. <https://www.discoverbowland.uk/Business/ribble-valley-e-bikes/>



CYCLE SHOPS

- A On Yer Bike**, Burnley www.onyerbike.com/on-yer-bike-burnley/
- B The Edge Cycleworks**, Lancaster www.theedgecycleworks.com/
- C Ribble Cycles**, Barrow, near Clitheroe www.ribboncycles.co.uk/our-stores/clitheroe/
- D Bowland Bikes CIC**, Clitheroe bowlandbikescic.co.uk/
- E Cycles Recycled**, Clitheroe cyclesrecycled.org/



EAT

- 9 Bridge House Tearooms** A friendly family-run café in an idyllic riverside location at the heart of the pretty village of Wray www.facebook.com/BridgeHouseFarmWray
- 10 Slaidburn Central Stores & Post Office** Award-winning village shop selling essentials, local produce, maps and guidebooks, snacks and souvenirs. <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100063684575556>
- 11 Riverbank Tearooms** Popular café on the edge of the characterful village of Slaidburn conveniently located adjacent to the car park and just a stone's throw from the River Hodder. Popular with cyclists. <https://www.riverbanktearooms.co.uk/>
- 12 Hudsons Ice Creams** Famous family-run ice cream shop in the centre of the village of Chatburn. Noted for home-made ice cream and light snacks to take away. <https://www.facebook.com/1947HudsonsIcecream>
- 13 The Red Pump Inn** An independent family-run country inn with an extensive menu, excellent cask ales, a good wine list and pleasant views from the beer garden. <https://www.discoverbowland.uk/Business/the-red-pump-inn/>
- 14 Potters Barn** Pottery café with lovely outdoor space welcoming walkers and cyclists. <https://potters-barn.com/>



STAY

- 15 Dale House Barn** An outstanding boutique B&B with bunk barn run by a very cycle-friendly proprietor. Green tourism Gold Award Winner. <https://www.discoverbowland.uk/Business/dale-house-barn-and-b-and-b/>
- 16 Hark to Bounty** Characterful village inn with accommodation in the pretty village of Slaidburn. <https://www.harktobounty.co.uk/>
- 17 The Traddock** An upmarket county house hotel in the beautiful stone village of Austwick. Outstanding hospitality in a beautiful setting. <https://www.discoverbowland.uk/Business/the-traddock/>
- 18 The Fleece Inn** Independent family-owned country inn with rooms conveniently located at the western gateway into the Forest of Bowland. <https://www.discoverbowland.uk/Business/the-fleece-inn/>
- 19 The Waddington Arms** A popular village pub and eatery at the heart of the pretty village with which it shares its name. <https://www.discoverbowland.uk/Business/waddington-arms/>
- 20 The Assheton Arms** A distinguished village inn and restaurant with luxurious accommodation in the picture postcard village of Downham. <https://asshetonarms.co.uk/>
- 21 Coach and Horses** Independent family-owned country inn with rooms and fine-dining restaurant. <https://www.discoverbowland.uk/Business/coach-and-horses/>
- 22 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/>