



Tour of the Dales

Arrival

The Dales Tour starts and finishes from the village of Reeth in Swaledale, which is just 30 minutes from the A1. If travelling by train, pick-ups from Darlington train station are available on request. We suggest you arrive some time during the afternoon enabling you to settle into your accommodation and give you some time to spend organising your bike and kit bag for the tour.

This also gives you an opportunity to explore this classic Dales village with its village green and views across Swaledale. Reeth has a number of country pubs, an especially good ice cream parlour and plenty of teashops wilfully tempting you to take it easy while you can.

As an introduction your guide will meet up with you and your riding companions for dinner in the evening, briefing you on the tour ahead and the planning for the start in the morning.

Day One

Riding distance: 35-40km

Our first riding day will have us heading out of Swaledale gradually climbing up the side of the valley over into Wensleydale. The riding is a mix of access trails for the grouse moors, trails across unique moorlands and ancient lanes. After a quick stop at Castle Bolton with its spectacular medieval fortress we traverse the valley heading to our destination for the day - the village of Bainbridge.

Bainbridge as the name suggests is at a bridge over the river Bain reputed to be the shortest river in England. The pub is just a short stroll across the village green for a well-earned meal and a pint of Black Sheep. The village still has a set of medieval 'stocks' on the village green but if we behave hopefully we will be allowed to leave the village safely for the next part of our tour!!

Day Two

Riding distance: 35 - 40km

From Wensleydale, we ride over 'Cam High Road', a characteristically straight roman road that heads over the hill towards Yorkshire's classic three peaks - Pen-Y-Ghent, Wharfedale and Ingleborough (home of the infamous cyclocross race every September).

Views on this day across into Lancashire and Cumbria are truly amazing. It's definitely a day for plenty of photo stops. We travel on, linking parts of the Pennine bridleway, ancient trails, singletrack and fast stony descents dropping into Ribblesdale. Here the Settle to Carlisle railway dominates the valley leading through to the Ribblesdale viaduct with its 24 arches - a triumph of Victorian architecture.

Our journey moves us out of Ribblesdale taking in a moonscape of limestone pavements on to one of the Dales best descents and our day's end at the village of Austwick.

Day Three

Riding distance: 35km

After breakfast, it's straight into some great single-track trails. Today's route leads us over two 'Clapper Bridges', these are primitive man-made crossings dating back to ancient times; they used long flanks of local rock to span the streams - now there's a challenge! An early coffee stop gives us the opportunity to stock up with lunch because we'll be away from civilization for the rest of the ride.

Wharfedale is our day's end, but first we'll be taking in Malham Tarn and the ancient roman road of Mastiles Lane. The day's ride ends with a breathtaking descent into picturesque Wharfedale. A short section of road leads to our accommodation for a well-earned rest and evening meal.

Day Four

Riding distance: 35-40km

A gentle start with a warm up along the valley. Then we climb out of Wharfedale heading back towards Malham Tarn. Height is gained gradually, opening out panoramic views across to Cracoe Fell and Skipton. In this area we often catch sight of a herd of Belted Galloway cows quite unusual in the Dales but recently introduced for their gentle grazing in limestone areas.

Today's route is mainly a mix of trails and single-track across open pasture with a fantastic descent dropping into Littondale for a bite of lunch. The afternoon is straight-forward - a big hill rewarded with a tremendous descent of the eye watering and arm aching type that the Yorkshire Dales are great for.

Once in Upper Wharfedale, our accommodation is a fantastic old coaching Inn nestled in the heart of the valley and bursting with character.- a real find! Fantastic food and real ale await you.

Day Five

Riding distance: 35-40km

Our last riding day certainly holds no anti-climax. We ride out of Wharfedale skirting the bottom of Buckden Pike past the memorial to a downed World War 2 plane.

Wensleydale is our lunchtime target. Some real backcountry riding gets us there on great trails winding our way across the valley. And then, to end on a high, we've kept a great descent just for the end down into Swaledale, our home valley.

Once settled back into our accommodation, rested and ready it's the end of tour dinner - black ties not required but an opportunity to reflect on a memorable trip have a few drinks and recount memorable stories.

Departure

This is the tour end. Bags and bikes packed after breakfast and the day is your own. You may like to wander round Reeth village and choose some souvenirs from the many craft shops or catch up on your postcard writing before you hit the tarmac trail homewards.

Please note: This itinerary may be subject to change