

A Full Circuit of Whitbarrow

Description

If the [yomp over the top of Whitbarrow](#) doesn't stimulate you then this walk of a similar 12 mile distance might do.

This walk climbs more than 2000ft with one stiffish scramble. You really get every aspect of wonderful Whitbarrow covered but it deserves a more leisurely pace than some walks. I would take a packed lunch and a full 6 hours over it.

Route

The route out of Crosthwaite and up to Whitbarrow Road is covered in the [Whitbarrow Yomp](#) walk so please refer to this before setting out.

This time from Whitbarrow Road turn right and generally downwards, passing through two gates. After the second gate which is the Broad Oak turn carry on for a further 250 yards until looking out for a scramble path through woodland up the side of the scar. Although this is only a 15 minute scramble it is quite exerting and you need to be careful not to lose a footing. It's a good idea to use the tree branches as balance.

When the path opens up you come to a stone stile over the wall and onto the plateau. Carry on straight. The path here is indistinct, but after a couple of hundred yards you join a more obvious path right which takes you around a mile and a half to Lords Seat. This is the only time on this walk when you get a full elevated view, so be sure to take it all in.



Chapel Head Scar

From the summit cairn there is a cairn marked path heading south west which takes you back down the side of the Fell to Witherslack Hall. You eventually (and surprisingly) reach a football pitch at the base of the cliff. A wooden stile takes you to a decision. There is a good and well-used footpath through High Crag wood which is a direct route to Beck Head. This path is private and a less direct route involves a little road walking around.

From Beck Head you begin a delightful skirt around the south of the hill until around 2 miles later you arrive at Rawsons Wood. The path from here is well signed and is



The giant face of White Scar at the base of Whitbarrow



Sheep pasture looking towards Brigsteer over the Lyth Valley from above Rawsons Farm.



The delightful track through Wakebarrow wood

a zig zag incline taking you back up the Fell and into woodland. At a junction you turn right into more woodland and then where there is a choice keep to a left hand fork. This beautiful and easy woodland walk takes you right the way to Township plantation and eventually opens up into new woodland and a delightful walk down sheep meadows to Row village.

The route back to Crosthwaite from here is again the same as in [the 'Yomp' walk](#) so please refer to this if you need detail.

Things to See on the Walk

The views from stepping on the plateau up to Lords Seat are magnificent all year round, but never better than on a crisp day in winter with snow sharpening up the surrounding Higher fells.

This is a walk to really check out Whitbarrow's flora and fauna. You won't find sheep grazing on the top but an extensively managed herd of highland cattle prompt admiration. More naturally, in Spring and Summer, the birdsong is delightful and you will catch glimpses of small birds skirting in and out of the heather. Larger raptors hover routinely, you would be unlucky not to see them soar and swoop.

Trees and shrubs are twisted and wind worn above limestone outcrops and pavements that are the equal of any in the Dales. You can skip over the clints of these and look deep into the grikes that hide plants unique to this landscape.

Everywhere juniper abounds. From late Summer you can fill your pockets with berries and wonder why some bushes have none and others plenty.

The two most awesome natural features of this walk are the giant cliffs. Chapel Head Scar rises high above Witherslack Hall and White Scar is the cliff prominent from the A590.

The woodland paths are famous for fritillary butterflies on warm Summer days. A few minutes spent on these paths and you will learn much about the species and their different habits.

It takes days to explore Whitbarrow properly, but on this walk you pick out all of the best bits. Enjoy.



Harts Tongue Fern (above) love the limestone grikes and early purple orchids (right) also enjoy this habitat