



*The views, even from this small mountain, are breathtaking.*

## Route 1

# Cat Bells, Lake District

Height	451m (1,480ft)
Total height gain	462m (1,516ft)
Distance	5.95km (3.7 miles)
Total time	2-3 hours
Grade	EASY
Start / Finish	CA12 5UE or NY 246 211 or <a href="http://noisy.curtains.tutorial">///noisy.curtains.tutorial</a>

Cat Bells, while smaller than many of its Lake District neighbours, is a great 'starter hill' for those looking for their first mountain climbing experience. Situated just a few miles from Keswick and easily accessible, this short walk will give you immense satisfaction as well as spectacular views and a real sense of what it's like to be in the mountains.

Our route starts from Hawse End on the west bank of Derwentwater. There's really nothing else here, so be sure to bring everything with you. There's a very small car park on the Skelgill road and some roadside parking if you're lucky. An even better option is to leave your car in nearby Keswick and take the boat across Derwentwater. There are regular shuttles during the summer between Keswick

and Hawse End, as well as circular trips around the lake that stop at various landing stages. Ask locally or search online for 'Hawse End shuttle service' for more information.

If arriving by boat, you'll need to walk up through the woods, past the Hawse End Outdoor Centre, turn left at the main road and you'll arrive at the car park and our starting point.



From the car park follow the signpost signed 'Cat Bells 1 mile'. This is a clear, easy-to-follow path that zigzags up and onto the ridge, directly to the summit. There are a couple of steeper sections where you might need to use your hands for support, but certainly nothing close to scrambling. Look around you as you're climbing – the views of Derwentwater to your left and the fells in all directions are truly spectacular. It's quite steep at times, with a brief respite around halfway followed by an even steeper climb to the top, so if you're not used to mountain walking, take it easy.

As you get close to the summit there are numerous path options but, as long as you're heading uphill, you're heading in the right direction.

It shouldn't take you long to reach the summit and when you get there it's like standing on top of a rock. Hopefully you're there on a beautiful summer's day and can really take in the views. Grab a drink and a snack and be happy that it's downhill for the rest of the walk.

1 When you're ready, continue in the same direction, on a much more gradual descent until you reach a little dip. 2 Take the path to your left that heads steeply downhill. This stone path zigzags its way down, before straightening out to skirt around the hill.

3 Towards the bottom of the hill, just above the treeline, a path heads off to your left. If you're just here to bag the peak and not interested in anything else, you can take this path directly back to the start point. However, hopefully you're looking for a bit more of a walk, so instead carry on ahead. Pass through a gate and follow the path around to the right which takes you down to the road. Turn right here, walking along the road, past the houses and look out for a gate on your left, signposted 'Lodor – 1 mile'.

4 This is the Cumbria Way National Trail and will lead you gently down to the banks of Derwentwater.

Cross over the stream, using the small bridge if you need to. The easy-to-follow path passes through farmland and adjacent to a wooded area. Go through a kissing gate and when you reach the next gate, take the path option to your left. Walk over the duckboards then bear right, walking down to the shore. As you get close to the lake look up to your left and you'll have a great view of where you've walked so far.

5 You're now at the south end of Derwentwater, with Keswick being at the far north end. The path runs alongside the

# Route 1 – Cat Bells, Lake District



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*The start of your walk is clearly signposted from the small car park.*

left bank, all the way back to your start point and is easy to follow. This is a beautiful section to walk along as it mixes the waterside with forests and open land, and there are plenty of opportunities to sit and relax on the water's edge, or even take a swim - with fantastic views back up to Cat Bells throughout.

The path skirts around a lovely lakeside house where you'll need to climb a short, unpaved stretch before turning right through a gate. (6) Where the path splits in two, stick with the right-hand option nearest the water. Here there is a landing stage and, if the boats are operating, there's an opportunity to catch a ferry back to Keswick, with a circular tour of the lake.

7 At the next landing stage, pass through the gate and turn left. You'll have more great views of Cat Bells and the entire ridge you walked along earlier, up to your left. Head through a gate and follow the path around to your right, which leads you into the grounds of the Hawse End Outdoor Centre. If you travelled over from Keswick on the ferry, you could bear right here for a short cut down to the jetty, otherwise carry on straight. When you reach the tarmac track, turn right and follow it up to the road. Turn left around the outdoor centre car park and then right along a footpath through the trees, which will take you back to where you started.