

16 CUMBRIA CAT BELLS

▶ Distance: 4¼ miles/7.6km ▶ Time: 2½ hours ▶ Grade: Moderate



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Derwent Water and Blencathra from Cat Bells.



PHOTO: TOM BAILEY

PLAN YOUR WALK



ROUTE

Start/parking Limited parking at Gutherscale grid ref NY246211, or limited layby parking above Brandelhow Park

Is it for me? Short but initially sharp over tricky terrain, with a scrambly ascent up to Cat Bells and a briefly steep descent. The return leg is gentle with easy navigation along the lake shore. Avoid in bad weather in winter

Stiles None

PLANNING

Nearest town Keswick

Refreshments The Swinside Inn (Tel: 01768 778253) is close by

Public toilets None

Public transport Honister Rambler seasonal bus service (77A) stops at Gutherscale;

bit.ly/CatbellsBus

Maps OS Explorer OL4; Landranger 90



CHOSEN BY...

PHILIP THOMAS

'A family fell,' as Wainwright dubbed

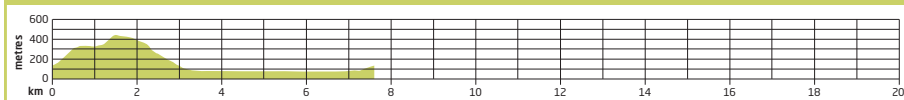
it, 'where grandmothers and infants can climb the heights together,' Cat Bells is a fantastic introduction to hillwalking in the Lake District. A popular peak, it offers a brief but exciting outing to the top; and come winter it's not out of bounds to the ordinary walker. Though modest in height at 451m, Cat Bells feels like a true mountain, both when seen from afar, and as you're scrambling up and along the ridge to the 'shapely topknot' at its summit. With due care, it's an attainable objective for curtailed daylight hours, rewarding intrepid

winter walkers with spectacular views over Derwent Water and of the snowcapped fells around it. Leaving the summit, our route then drops down to the lake, completing a satisfying circuit through the woodland along its shore.

1 Start

Take footpath from the car park up and around onto northern tip of ridge, picking up main path south towards summit. Take care as you negotiate a few scrambly sections, twisting over and between a few rocky outcrops. As you emerge onto grassy tump (and false summit) of Skelgill Bank, the 'shapely topknot' of Cat Bells proper

GRADIENT PROFILE



16 CUMBRIA CAT BELLS

► OS Explorer map OL4 ► Buy maps at: ordnancesurvey.co.uk/shop

rears up in front, looking for all world like a true mountain. Yet the top is a mere half-a-mile further on, and a few hundred feet up. A clear path leads to bald and stony summit, where summits are rewarded with a magnificent panorama.

2 1 mile/1.6km

From Cat Bells continue S, heading down ridge for about 700 yards until reaching a crosspath in col of Hause Gate. Turn L onto path that zigzags downhill off fell towards Derwent Water. As gradient eases, path eventually merges with route of Allerdale Ramble, before emerging onto a quiet lane. (Optionally, you could turn L onto this bridleway and follow this higher path back to the start).

3 2 miles/3.2km

Turn R and follow lane for 300 yards past Manesty Holiday Cottages before turning L at fingerpost through gate towards Manesty Park and Derwent Water. Pass through series of gates until reaching shore and turn L into park, following shore path until joining track, where there are a few cottages scattered around Brandelhow Bay.

4 3½ miles/5.6km

Keep to clear path through pleasant woodland of Brandelhow Park, following shingly shore of Derwent Water past various bays and landing



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stages, and a collection of intriguing forest sculptures. When you reach gate at end of path, turn R onto lane to Outdoor Centre. Turn L across the centre car park and up bank through kissing gate onto a footpath, briefly forking R through the woods up to road. Turn L on road over cattle grid and follow

the road round back to Gutherscale car park. **CW**

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