

# The Skiddaw Loop

One of the Lakeland classics. Bikers have been enjoying this route since the dawn of cycling. A cycling club called 'The Rough Stuff Fellowship' record following this route in the 1920s on their trusty touring bikes. Nowadays we would recommend using a mountain bike. The ride circles the Skiddaw massif, formed by the eruptions of ancient volcanoes which dominate the surrounding area. The entire route presents few real challenges but does explore some of the wilder corners of the Northern Fells offering a wonderful wilderness flavour. Route finding is straightforward but have proper equipment and supplies, including OS Landranger 90 and a compass, should visibility deteriorate.

*This route is best completed in a clockwise direction.*

Start at the Tourist Information Centre in the Market Square (GR NY266234) (enquire about prevailing weather conditions before you set off).

**1** Head N on Main Street for 0.75km then turn R onto Crosthwaite Road (signed Penrith and Carlisle). After another 400m cross a major roundabout and take the second exit onto the A59.

**2** Almost immediately turn R signed Appletwhaite, then follow this road through Millbeck before returning to A591.

**3** Turn R and ride on the A591 past Dodd Wood (café) for a distance of 4.8 km (3m).

**4** R turn signed Orthwaite (GR NY234306) skirts around the northern flanks of Skiddaw. Continue along this for 4.5km (2m) and avoid the first bridleway sign that you see after leaving the main road.

**5** At Peter House Farm (GR NY249323) turn R through a gate on to a narrow metal track. Begin climbing for 1km (0.6m) and pass through 3 metal/wooden gates.

**6** A rough track turns R (GR NY252321) and heads SE climbing into the mountains.

**7** A stiff climb over 1.5km brings you to a metal gate next to Whitewater Dash; a dramatic waterfall. The track crosses this by a bridge and continues to climb less steeply for another 1km (0.6m) before levelling out in a remote area called 'Back o' Skiddaw'.

**8** A descent of 800m presents you with a ford or a narrow bridge crossing of the infant River Caldew and another short climb levels out at Skiddaw House, an old shooting lodge now used as a Youth Hostel (GR NY287291).

**9** Skirt around the lower wall of the hostel following a track past the outbuildings heading S. The track drops to a small bridge and then a gate a short while later. After 1km (0.6m) descending a rocky track look for a smaller track heading R onto Lonscale Fell and the western side of the valley. (GR NY292 279).

**10** Follow the Route 2 description for the route back to Keswick.

**Start/Finish:** Keswick Tourist Information Centre (GR NY266234)

**Distance:** 17 miles (28km)

**Grade:** Medium - Challenge. Suitable for mountain bikes only

**Refreshments:** Keswick, Dodd Wood

**Parking:** Car parking available in Keswick at Otley Road and Bell Close car parks.

**Start/Finish:** Keswick L Pool (GR NY270237)

**Distance:** 11 miles (18km)

**Grade:** Medium - Challenge. Suitable for mountain bikes only

**Refreshments:** Keswick

**Parking:** Car parking at the Old Railway Station

