

Alex Bourke of Vegetarian Guides heads to Britain's favourite national park.



THE LAKE DISTRICT

The 885 square miles of the Lake District national park in Cumbria are a walker's paradise, with green dales, rocky crags, huge peaceful lakes, bustling villages, stone houses, cosy pubs, and more veggie-friendly bed and breakfasts, cafés and restaurants than any other county. Roam the fells, try out cliff climbing or kayaking, take a boat tour, then chill out in a waterside café with a pot of tea and a slice of cake.

The pretty town of Ambleside is a popular centre for walkers and climbers and a terrific base to explore the southern Lake District. Stay at the brand new **Ambleside Manor** vegetarian bed and breakfast, which has 16 rooms (£45–£75 per person) and welcomes children. Kids from 7 to 70 love a movie and pizza at **Zeffirelli's** vegetarian Italian café, pizzeria, jazz bar and cinema complex, or go gourmet at **Fellinis** arthouse cinema and 'vegetarranean' restaurant.

Fox Hall, Cumbria's only vegan B&B (£35–£45 per person, children £10), is two miles south of the market town of Kendal, which has several museums and galleries. There is a huge three-course dinner menu (£15), and you and the kids can learn to cook vegan dishes on cookery classes tailored to your needs.

The newly opened four-star **Sandburne Vegetarian Guest House** on the edge of Keswick is a piece of history, home of the legendary Donald Watson, a modest Cumbrian woodwork



teacher and hill walker who in 1944 invented the word 'vegan' and founded the Vegan Society. The two ensuite twin rooms (£40–£55 per person) have views over the town and hills. Proprietor Anthony is Donald's son-in-law and an ambassador for the local

Theatre by the Lake, giving you discounts on several different plays every week. You can walk to the 3,000-year-old Castlerigg stone circle, take a boat trip or row a hired boat around the lake, and take the kids drawing at the Keswick pencil museum.

Also recommended...

- **Yewfield** vegetarian B&B (pictured), four miles outside Ambleside, also has self-contained apartments in 30 acres of grounds.

- **Rattle Gill** vegetarian café by the water in Ambleside does a fabulous chilli loaded with beans and veggies, doorstep sandwiches, pots of tea and giant coffees.

- For the ultimate in romantic luxury, **Lancrigg** vegetarian country house hotel in Grasmere has four-poster beds, whirlpool baths and the **Green Valley** organic vegetarian restaurant, open to non-residents for breakfast, lunch, teas and dinner.



- **Upfront** puppet theatre and gallery, six miles north of Penrith, has a 95% vegetarian café, as well as a self-catering holiday cottage, an eco-lodge and caravans.

- Enjoy a candlelit dinner with organic wine at **Quince & Medlar** gourmet vegetarian restaurant in Cockermouth.



NEED TO KNOW

Ambleside

www.ambleside-manor.co.uk
www.yewfield.co.uk
www.zeffirellis.com
www.fellinisambleside.com
www.rattlegill.com

Kendal

www.fox-hall.co.uk

Keswick

www.sandburne.co.uk

Grasmere

www.lancrigg.co.uk

Penrith

www.up-front.com

Cockermouth

www.quinceandmedlar.co.uk

● For more info go to www.visitcumbria.com

ABOUT ALEX

Alex Bourke is the co-author with Ronny Worsey of *Vegetarian North of England*, which includes 40 pages of Lake District B&Bs, restaurants, cafés, shops and sightseeing ideas. Available from bookshops for £9.95 and online at www.vegetarian.travel.