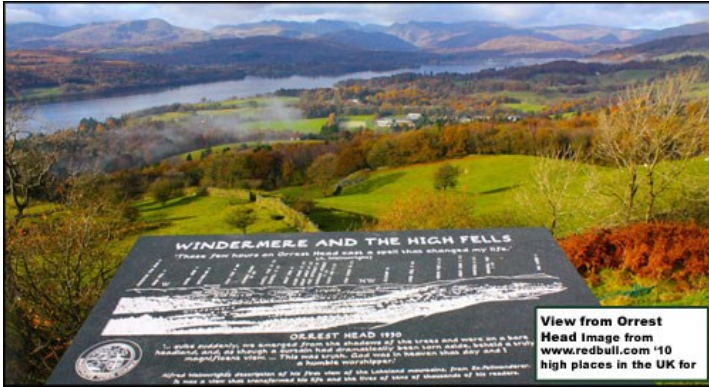


# Walks from Running Hare Orrest Head - Two options



A walk to Orrest Head is an absolute must on a visit to Windermere. The view of the fells across Lake Windermere is one of the best without having to climb a mountain. It is this view of lakeland mountains that had such an impact on Alfred Wainwright who went on to inspire thousands of others with his popular walk books.

Although it's uphill, it's not too strenuous and the terrain is easy underfoot. Until recently the last stretch was steep and rocky. In 2021, it was made more accessible with a flatter winding path suitable for pushchairs and wheelchairs.

**Shorter walk:** Just over an hour there and back via Windermere town. This walk is largely on well-surfaced tarmac or gritted paths.

**Longer walk:** A beautiful 2-hour walk through fields and woodland with some trickier terrain on the way up, fine in a decent pair of trainers or walking boots. More muddy encounters are likely!

Both walks take you back down through the town with its plentiful options for eating, drinking and shopping. Best toilet option is Booths supermarket, next to the station before you properly descend into the town.

**Check out our guide to foraging to find some tasty pickings on this walk.**

## Longer walk ~ About 2 hours

1. Turn left out of Running Hare up Limethwaite Road, then take the second right up Fairfield Road. Turn left at the top into Victoria Road North directly to the dead end where you'll find a tall narrow gate.
2. Turn left after the gate, going down the winding tarmacked path.
3. Go through the next gate, carrying along with housing on your left.
4. The path turns into a bridleway taking you to the road, *Millbeck Close*. Cross over to rejoin the path, with dry-stone walls and housing on both sides, then a stream to the left. Ignore the road and bridge on your left, and go straight on following the sign *Public footpath A591*.
5. Straight ahead is a house with beautiful gardens divided by Mill Beck, the stream. The stone sign shows the footpath to the left. Carry on up the footpath, with the garden's wooden fencing to your right.
6. Climb the wooden stile at the end and carefully cross the railway line (Windermere station is down the track to the left, and the line goes to Oxenholme on the right).
7. Go up the steps and through the kissing gate, following the path under the telegraph wire into the woods straight ahead. There's a right and left fork that soon meet to form a single path again where you emerge into grassland. This stretch can be muddy.
8. The gate on the right is locked, but going through the gap in the wall, there's an adjacent gate that opens on the right. Follow the path across the field towards the big trees by the wall ahead.
9. There are two gates in the walls at right angles to each other. Take the gate on the right side and follow the stony track, with rocky knolls to your right. Head up towards a clump of large trees.
10. Continue along the stony path through the field with the wall now on your left. Go through the wide metal gate then exit through the wooden kissing gate to the pavement along the A591.
11. Turn left towards Windermere town. You'll see Lake Windermere and walk past farm buildings and the *Welcome to Windermere* sign.
12. Cross Thwaites Road on your left, then cross over the A591 at the traffic island by the signposts. Watch out as it can be busy!
13. Near the end of the short tarmac stretch, look to your right for the National Trust wooden gate to take the rocky track uphill (there's spring foraging opportunities along here).
14. Ignore the gate straight ahead (with the cattle warning, though we've never seen any) to go through the gate on the left and up the steep path to the left. Enjoy the views of the lake behind you. Don't go into any other fields, keep the wall to your left until you come to the woods at the top.
15. Enter *Common Woods* through the gate. Follow the path, in a few minutes walking through the wide gap between some beautiful moss blanketed walls.

16. Carry on following the stony path winding its way up to a wooden kissing gate, after which you immediately go left over the stone stile in the wall.
17. Follow the winding path through the woods. You may need to duck under a fallen tree, victim of Storm Arwen, until you come to a bench and wide gravel track.
18. Turn right to take the track uphill and suddenly you pop out onto Orrest Head.
19. Lap up the views and enjoy working out how the new compass sculpture and benches work. Check out the *Windermere and High Fells* diagram to see if you can identify the mountains. Morecambe Bay is visible to the left.
20. It's an easy walk back down now, retracing your steps to where you emerged on the gravel track by the bench. This time stay on the gravel track as it bends right. On your right you'll shortly see the older, rockier way up to Orrest Head.
21. Continue down till you come to Elleray Woods, with a post marked with a 9. Here you can either continue on the wide winding gravel path downwards or take a steeper short-cut by entering the woods ahead then immediately turning left taking a narrow rocky path down through the woods.
22. Either way, you'll come to a 'fire logs for sale' site on the left, but before you carry on down the road, look to your right for a familiar figure in the woods, who may have a poisonous pimple on its nose... Time for a selfie? Now continue down the road, passing the little Tree House shed with metal works for sale.
23. You're now walking along a tarmac road, though there's rarely a car to be seen as it's for residents only, winding its way down to Windermere town past the occasional house.
24. At the bottom, turn right to cross the A591 at the lights, then turn left and go uphill before taking a right into Windermere town High Street.
25. Cross over the road to go down the left side of the one-way system on Victoria Street, then keep left to go down Crescent Road. There's plenty of shops, cafes and pubs if you want to reward yourself with a little edible or drinkable treat after your fabulous walk.
26. To get back to Running Hare, turn left into Oak Street by the Co-op and walk to the end where you'll find an entrance to Queen's Park. Follow the path on the left, passing the tennis courts. You can now see the back of Running Hare. Home Sweet Home. Enjoy a nice rest; and another snack and a drink perhaps.

*Alternative (26) if it's been very wet* Queen's Park may be rather muddy. Before reaching the end of Oak Street, take a right down Woodland Road, then left down Park Road, then turn left into Limethwaite Road and you're home and dry.

## Shorter walk ~ about 1 hour

We're taking you through the woods not fully on tarmac or graveled path here. You can follow the even more straightforward walk in printed information leaflet on the sitting room shelf, from the tourist information shop or from the noticeboard at the base of the hill before ascending.

The walk is about 5km, with a total ascent of 107.77 m, reaching a maximum elevation of 219.57 m

1. Turn right out of Running Hare down Limethwaite Road, then take the first right onto Park Road, walking alongside the park until you reach the crossroads.
2. Turn right into Woodland Road and then take the first left into Broad Street.
3. Cross the main road at the traffic lights towards Sainsbury's and walk up the hill on Main Road, keeping on that side and continuing up Ellera Road where you can cross over to the right side.
4. Reaching the A591 main road between Windermere and Ambleside, turn right to walk the short stretch to the traffic lights where you cross.
5. Turn right, then immediately left where you'll see a sign for Orrest Head and Ellera Woods. Follow the left path onto the gravel public footpath signed A592 Troutbeck Road (the road to the right also goes up to Orrest Head).
6. Walk between the dry stone walls into the woods on the stone track uphill. Ignore the fork downhill on the left, and take the right path up to Orrest Head, winding uphill through the woods.
7. The path curves right as you near the top. When it forks, leave the main path and head left up the wooden 'stairway'; ignore the path descending on the right. You have a wall and fields on your left now.
8. Continue up the stony steps, then exit the woods, continuing straight ahead on the wide open stone pathway originally created for Victorian coaches.
9. The previous rockier climb to the summit was through the metal kissing gate on the left and up the stony stairs, followed by a final short, steep scramble to the top. But now the new path passes this for a more accessible ascent.

Worth the hike, isn't it? After you've enjoyed the views, and perhaps had a little sit down and a snack (reaching a summit is best enjoyed with a rewarding snack in my opinion), descend following the instructions overleaf from point (20).

More info about the works here, or just search Orrest Head, new access.

[www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/visiting/things-to-do/walking/mileswithoutstiles/mws50](http://www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/visiting/things-to-do/walking/mileswithoutstiles/mws50)

