

Girl About Northumberland's 48 hours in **NORTHUMBERLAND**

**MY 2 NIGHT ITINERARY FOR
ADVENTURE-FILLED, FAMILY FUN**



"When people are considering a weekend adventure in Northumberland, they'll probably naturally gravitate towards the coast for our castles, cycle routes and swimming in the North Sea. But there is loads more to do for adventure-seekers inland too..."

Beth - Girl About Northumberland

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When people think about planning a weekend adventure break in Northumberland, they probably will naturally gravitate towards the coast. I don't blame them: castles, cycle routes and swimming in the North Sea - every experience is wonderful and ideal for adventure seeking enthusiasts.

But there is so much on offer in land that really needs to be explored.

Therefore, I have put together an itinerary for a brilliant weekend adventure break in Northumberland that will hopefully provide some fresh inspiration and get you itching to book your Northumberland break.

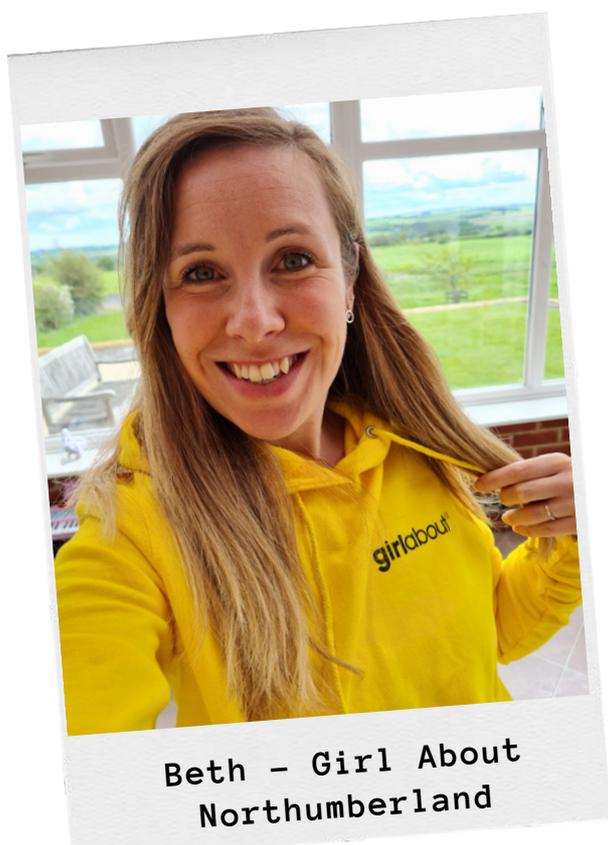
You will need a car for this particular adventure as Northumberland is vast and you may struggle to get around without one. Also don't forget to pack your walking boots, towel and comfy clothes- you're going to need them.

The county of Northumberland has it all; dramatic rolling hills, a stunning coastline, the space to breathe and take stock. If you are looking for adventure with a comfy night's stay whilst sampling the best local produce, then read on and be prepared to feel inspired.



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Friday afternoon

Kick off your adventure break by walking along part of the famous Hadrian's Wall, stopping to take photos at the popular Sycamore Gap.

Park at The Sill: National Landscape and Discovery Centre (using postcode NE47 7AN) You pay for parking when you leave so the cost will depend on how long you spend here. The Sill is free to visit if you have time, it is worth popping in to see the exhibition on Northumberland's natural landscape and learn more about the scope of the land.

You could visit the café in the Sill before you begin your walk or pop in on the way back. I recommend the homemade sausage rolls and cheese scones.

The walk to Sycamore Gap has two routes, one more challenging than the other. Of course I am going to recommend the challenging one as you are here for an adventure right? Don't worry though, it is still completely manageable as we have done it with young children. You will be instantly rewarded with stunning views across Northumberland's finest land with Hexham to the south and the Cheviots over to the north.

Hadrian's Wall covers an impressive eighty miles from Cumbria across Northumberland and the part I am focusing on is a popular route and is said to be the most photographed part of Northumberland National Park.

Now referred to as the "Robin Hood Tree", thanks to its starring role in the film "Prince of Thieves", it is easy to see why this route in particular is so popular.

After you have spent time walking and exploring this section of Hadrian's Wall, head back down the road you walked up. Just before you get back to The Sill, turn right along the main road, to Twice Brewed Inn which sits on the B6318, the old roman road.

I recommend stopping here for your evening meal. Twice Brewed Inn serves hearty, home-cooked meals as well as serving an impressive selection of their own home-brewed ales and spirits. Either relax in the main restaurant or sit outside in the sun trap beer garden.

You can opt to spend the night here or it is also worth mentioning that there is a Youth Hostel located right next door to The Sill, if you want to go for this option.

However, I am going to make another suggestion for your night's stay...



Friday evening

I recommend staying at Sycamore Glamping Pods, which is situated just a twenty-minute drive away from the Sill. Based on a working farm, there are two glamping pods to choose from: "Cedar" or "Willow" pod. Both have been carefully thought out and provide everything you could need for a comfortable night's sleep. You are going to need it after all that exploring and we are only just getting started.

Saturday morning

After a cooked breakfast in your pod (hob, microwave and fridge are all available) pack up and make your way over to Kielder Water and Forest Park. This is a 35-minute drive from the Sycamore Glamping and the drive over is gorgeous. You will really get to experience Northumberland along this road and I bet you want to wind the window down and stick your head out to take it all in. (Hanging out of the tongue is up to you.)

The part I am going to direct you to is called Calvert Kielder and this is where you are going to find your adrenaline seeking activities. Use postcode NE48 1BS. The Calvert Trust started off based in Keswick, Lake District, before a second centre was opened here at Kielder.

Calvert Kielder welcomes families, individuals and groups, with self-catering options available and adventure package holidays there is something for everyone.





Saturday morning continued

Here is a brief overview of what you can expect to do here:

The Kielder Zip Coaster – “sees thrill-seekers harnessed into a seating position as they glide amongst the trees, dipping and twisting up to speeds of 20mph.”

- A High Ropes course
- Low Ropes – both build confidence and balance.
- Clay Pigeon Shooting
- Archery
- Zip Line

And on the water:

- Canoeing
- Sailing
- Motor Boats
- Kayaking

There are different activity packages available, and I recommend calling the team on 01434 250232 for availability and to book ahead of your trip.

You are going to be spending the day in a beautiful location – Kielder is the largest man-made lake in Northern Europe. That is why I recommend you spend the whole day here as there is simply so much to take in. You can't have a weekend adventure break in Northumberland without coming to Kielder.

Saturday lunchtime

Take a break from the action and call into The Forest Bar and Restaurant which is a five-minute drive down the road from Calvert Kielder. This pub is part of the wider Kielder Waterside Retreat and boasts panoramic views across the lake. With a choice of snacks, mains and desserts you have a few options depending on how your stomach is feeling after your exciting morning.



Saturday afternoon

You can now dive back into your adventurous activities depending on which adventure package you went for. Alternatively, you could go for a walk around part of the Kielder reservoir paths. Described as being a “playground for cycling, walking and outdoor enthusiasts”, Kielder Forest has a good footpath which is easy to follow and makes for a perfect afternoon walk, keeping your eye out for wildlife and watching the fishermen on the lake.

If you are wanting to explore the northern part of the lake, I suggest you jump in the car and drive to Kielder Castle (postcode NE48 1ER) which is part of the Forestry Commission. Here you will find 5 walking trails and 7 bike trails with bike hire available on site.

Things to note: car parking costs £5 for the day, or £2 for an hour or under.
Postcode for local fuel stations:
Bellingham Village NE48 2BS or Kielder Village NE48 1EG



Saturday night

Kielder is home to the UK’s darkest skies and you will definitely want to experience this while you are here. You have the option to visit the Kielder Observatory at night for a real star gazing experience or simply park up in one of the car parks (they charge until 3am to allow for star gazing) and take in the clear night sky, free from light pollution.

You will need to pre-book in advance for the Kielder Observatory experience and please note this gets booked up pretty quick so you will need to plan ahead. An adult ticket costs £63 to give you an idea of pricing.

You are going to be spending the night at The Pheasant Inn, a comfortable bed and breakfast accommodation located just next to Kielder Water (postcode NE48 1DD). Book a table for your evening meal to sample some local produce and put your feet up next to a real fire and enjoy a glass of wine or beer. The cosy atmosphere and comfortable beds will ensure you have a great night’s sleep after your busy day.



Sunday morning

Enjoy a hearty Northumbrian breakfast before heading off in the car, east towards the Simonside Hills. Simonside is part of Northumberland National Park, and you can enjoy a circular walk which takes you to the summit. Once at the summit of Simonside you are rewarded with views encompassing the Cheviot Hills and the North Sea coastline.

The circular walk is 4.5 miles in total and should take you a little over 3 hours to complete. There are a few steep climbs but again we have done this one with kids, so it is manageable. As you leave the car park, there is a steep climb through woodland before opening up and showcasing the stunning and dramatic landscape of Northumberland.

Sunday lunch

From Simonside, head down the road towards the pretty village of Rothbury. Here you will find a choice of tearooms and pubs. So, whether you are wanting something light (The Vale Café is your go to for this) or a full Sunday roast (the Newcastle Hotel) you will find what you are craving here.

Parking is free in Rothbury, and I recommend parking by the river for a leisurely walk into the village centre. Don't worry, I know your legs may be feeling a bit tired by now, the walk isn't far at all. Less than half a mile in fact. You won't be disappointed with your visit to Rothbury and I believe it is the perfect location to round off your weekend adventure break in Northumberland.



My 5 favourite places to stay

- >> Huts In The Hills
- >> The Cook and Barker Inn
- >> The Victoria Hotel Bamburgh
- >> The Dirty Bottles Alnwick
- >> The White Swan Hotel