6 epic UK walks to take on in 2026

National Walking Week is held in May, an annual event designed to get the nation on their feet.

It's designed to encourage people of all ages to enjoy some of the many health benefits of walking, including:

- Improving your mood
- Helping you sleep better
- Boosting your immune system
- Easing muscle pain and stiffness
- Helping with weight management.

According to the British Heart Foundation, it can also reduce your risk of developing heart and circulatory diseases and cancer.

If you fancy a challenge, spectacular scenery, or simply a nice walk, read on to discover six epic walks across the UK you could try this year.

Epic for: The challenge

Cape Wrath Trail, Scotland

According to Walk Highlands, this route has the reputation of being Britain's toughest long-distance walk, so only undertake this if you're an experienced walker.

It's an unmarked route, which stretches around 350km, from Fort William up to Cape Wrath. Along the way, you'll experience wild terrain and beautiful landscapes. As it's unmarked and such a long walk, you'll be able to plan your own exact route, although many operators can help you map out the separate stages.

You'll be backpacking and will need to carry food and a tent, so you do need to be self-sufficient. There are plenty of "bothies" along the way, unlocked shelters which provide four walls and a roof, if you need to take a break.

It's undeniably tough, but it's also a true adventure.

The Pennine Way, England

This 431 km route begins in Edale in the Peak District and ends in the Scottish Borders. The first National Trail in England, it's perhaps one of the UK's most famous walks.

Although you can walk the trail all year round, it's at its best from May to September. Just be warned, you might find snow in the more northerly parts of the walk if you do go during the winter months.

Along the route, you'll take in the Peak District, Yorkshire Dales, Swaledale Valley, and North Pennines. Finally, you'll reach Hadrian's Wall in Northumberland, before you end at Kirk Yetholm in the Borders.

It’s a hilly walk, with some rough and rugged terrain. There are plenty of great places to take rest days, such as Hebden Bridge, Skipton, and Hadrian’s Wall.

Epic for: Scenery

Rhossili Headland, Gower, Wales

This walk is just 3.5 miles, but what it lacks in distance it makes up for with its picturesque views.

The full scenic sweep of Rhossili beach is the main event, but even right at the start of the walk, you’ll enjoy stunning scenery, such as the view of the Worm’s Head, a winding tidal island. You’ll also see the shipwreck of the Helvetia if you go during low tide.

Plus, you can take in the unusual sight of The Vile, a rare example of a medieval open-field strip system, with each distinctive, individual strip separated by low grassy banks.

Epic for: History

Hadrian’s Wall Path, England

Step into history as you follow Hadrian’s Wall, built by the Romans around AD 122 under Emperor Hadrian.

The wall was designed to control movement and acted as a physical boundary marking the north-west frontier of the Roman Empire.

Spanning around 135 km, the trail stretches coast to coast across northern England. Along the way, you’ll encounter a variety of terrain and landscapes, including urban areas, rolling farmland, and remote, open countryside.

Plus, there are spectacular views which stretch for miles.

You’ll also see small Roman forts, turrets, and defensive structures as you walk, with parts of the wall still visible.

Hadrian’s Wall is part of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire UNESCO World Heritage Site, which includes sites across the UK and connected Roman frontiers in Germany and beyond.

Epic for: Filming locations

Causeway Coast, Northern Ireland

Game of Thrones fans will instantly recognise many of the spots along the way, as the region acted as a central filming base for the highly popular series.

Ballintoy Harbour was used as the setting for the Iron Islands, with its rugged, dramatic, exposed coastline proving the perfect backdrop.

Meanwhile, Cushendun Caves feature in key scenes involving Melisandre. Tucked away into the coastline, the smaller cave is open to visitors, but be aware that access is via a rocky, uneven beach.

And although the Giant's Causeway isn't directly seen in the show itself, it features more of the same type of beautiful coastal views and natural terrain.

Whether you're a Game of Thrones fan or not, the whole area offers a dramatic, picturesque setting for a long coastal walk or a series of shorter walks.

Epic for: An easier walk

Buttermere Circuit, Lake District, England

If you're looking for a scenic walk without the effort, this is the perfect choice. With flat, well-maintained paths, it's often described as one of the most rewarding short walks in the UK.

The circular loop follows Buttermere Lake, and you'll experience spectacular scenery and a constantly shifting landscape as you walk, from woodland paths to open lakeside.

Burtness Wood is a peaceful, shaded stretch offering a direct contrast to the open lakeside walks. Take a short detour, and you'll reach Sourmilk Gill waterfall, which offers stunning views right across the valley.

The whole route is just 7.2km, making it ideal for beginners, families, or simply if you fancy a low effort walk instead of a demanding hike.