

Rosedale

The moorland railway

Look for the line of the railway, which runs along the edge of the dale, high on the valley sides. It was an impressive feat of engineering, built in the 1860s and winding 14 miles over the moors, across difficult terrain, from Bank Top in Rosedale to Battersby Junction (near Great Ayton). At Rosedale, the railway branches into two levels – the upper line led to the mines above the kilns while the lower one (the one you walk on) served the kilns themselves. Once the iron ore had been processed, it was taken out of the valley by rail and on to County Durham and, later, Middlesbrough (with coal from County Durham coming the other way, to use in the kilns).



Mines, kilns and cottages

From 1855 until 1926 Rosedale rang with the sound of the Victorian industrial age. The valley was transformed with the opening of the ironstone mines, not least by the building of giant roasting kilns, where the miners roasted (or 'calcined') the iron ore to reduce its weight for transportation and remove impurities. Vast quantities of ore were tipped into the kilns from the railway line above, mixed with coal and then set alight.

A huge workforce was needed and the population of Rosedale increased rapidly to nearly 3000 people – more than ten times what it is today. Terraced houses in the dale were built for the miners, while the railwaymen occupied homes closer to the mines – you can still see their ruined remains.



Ruins and relics of the industrial age

Now a peaceful, rural dale in the heart of the National Park, in the nineteenth century Rosedale was part of industrial Yorkshire, with its ironstone mines, kilns and even a moorland railway. This fabulous 7½-mile circuit takes you from pretty Rosedale Abbey village through rolling valley farmland and into Rosedale itself, bringing you back along the old railway track past the impressive ruins of the old roasting kilns. From the railway, you get superb views of Rosedale – it's very definitely a walk for a clear day.

Did you know?

There's no abbey in the village of Rosedale Abbey. It was actually a medieval Cistercian priory, which was pulled down in the 19th century – much of the stone was used to build the present church, which welcomes visitors.

Great for:

more than a stroll, big-sky views, history buffs

Length:

7 ½ miles (12km)

Time:

5 hours

Start/Finish:

Rosedale Abbey village green

Grid Reference:

SE 725 960

Map:

OS Explorer OL26

Refreshments:

Rosedale Abbey and Dale Head Farm

Toilets:

Rosedale Abbey village



There are three village pubs in Rosedale Abbey (Milburn Arms, Coach House Inn and White Horse Farm Inn) and two tea rooms around the green – one at the Abbey Stores village shop and also Graze on the Green. Halfway around the walk, Dale Head Farm Tea Garden is a welcome stop.



National Park Information Point in Abbey Stores village shop, Rosedale Abbey.

... ruins and relics of the industrial age ...

Route instructions

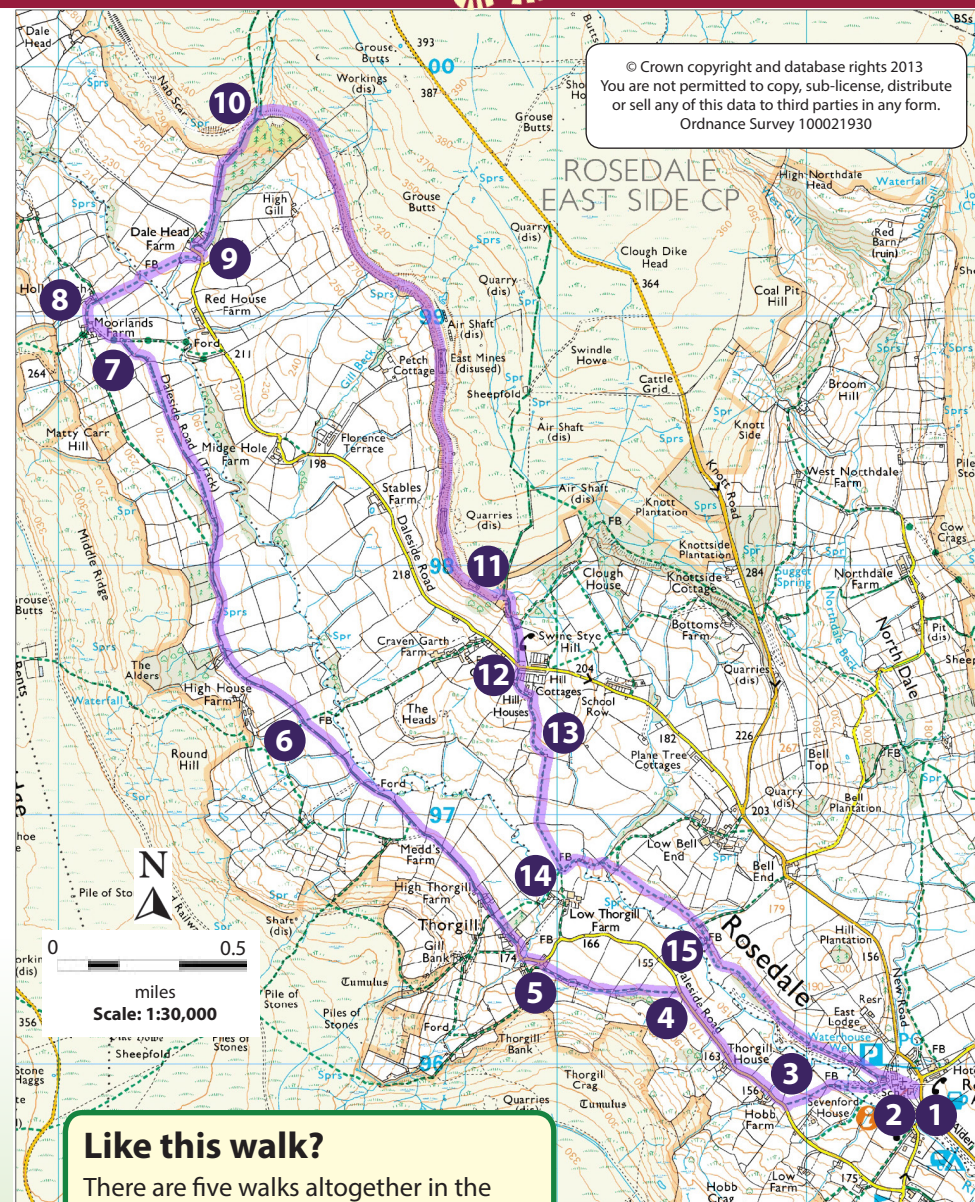
- 1 From the village green, walk through the churchyard, keeping the church on your left. Pass the remains of the Priory, leave the churchyard, cross the road and take the path directly opposite, through the kissing gate (signposted 'Public Footpath, Dunn Carr Bridge').
- 2 Cross straight over the campsite road and continue along the path, through an avenue of trees. At the campsite turning circle bear left across the grass, go over the footbridge, up the steps, through the gate and along the stone trod across the field.
- 3 Turn right on the road.
- 4 Turn left across the fields (signposted 'Thorgill'), bearing rightwards through waymarked gates.
- 5 Turn left along the road through Thorgill.
- 6 Continue ahead – the road turns into a track.
- 7 At the minor country lane, turn left. Walk up the lane to the farm buildings and turn right, along the track ('Public Footpath' sign) to Hollin Bush Farm.
- 8 At the farmyard take the footpath on the right, by crossing the stone step stile and cut diagonally across the field. Cross the footbridge and continue to the road.
- 9 Turn left along the road. Just before Dale Head Farm take the bridleway on the right (signposted to 'Great Fryup Dale'), and walk along the edge of the woods, above the stream.
- 10 At the top, turn right along the old railway line.
- 11 Follow the path to the left of the buildings. Go through the gate, bear right down to the road.
- 12 Cross the road at Hill Cottages and follow the footpath straight ahead.
- 13 At the gate, turn right, along a rutted track down the side of the field, past the wooden stable. At the next gate, turn right, down across the fields to the stream.
- 14 At the end of the stone trods by the footbridge, turn left (don't cross the footbridge), keeping the stream on your right. Follow the path away from the stream, through a gate and around the side of a hill. Go through the metal gate and follow the waymarkers across the fields.
- 15 Go through the gate, follow the boardwalk by the stream and continue straight on – the path returns to Rosedale Abbey via the campsite.



The route follows minor roads and farm lanes at times, and passes through farmyards and outbuildings. There are lots of gates (and one stile) en route. On the return, please do not explore the ruined kiln buildings you pass on the track, as parts of this old industrial area are dangerous. Also note that the railway route is exposed, and it can be windy and cold in winter.



Please note, you must keep your dog on a lead on the old railway track. Elsewhere, keep your dog under control at all times, and always on a lead near livestock – you're likely to encounter farm animals on most of the lower parts of this walk.



Like this walk?

There are five walks altogether in the 'Walks around Rosedale Abbey' book, which you can buy from our online shop.



You will need OS Explorer OL26 map for this walk.