Discover the beauty of the picturesque Ribble Valley by car
The Ribble Valley Loop

There’s so much to explore in the Ribble Valley so we’ve devised a driving tour taking you directly from Northcote in a circular loop to introduce you to the delights this often overlooked part of the country has to offer.

Do not rely on your phone’s sat nav to guide you, as some of the areas on the route are rural and you may lose signal. Always carry a good map with you and familiarise yourself with the route before you set off.

Northcote to Whalley: 2.6 miles • Whalley to Clitheroe: 3.7 miles
Clitheroe to Slaidburn: 11.2 miles • Slaidburn to Whitewell: 6.5 miles
Whitewell to Great Mitton: 7 miles • Great Mitton to Hurst Green: 3 miles
Hurst Green to Northcote: 11 miles

Total loop distance is 45 miles and the estimated driving time is 2 hours 5 minutes. However, we recommend taking your time to discover the hidden gems of the Ribble Valley.

STAGE 1 NORTHCOTE TO WHALLEY

2.6 MILES

Picturesque Whalley village

The well-preserved gatehouse at Whalley Abbey

DIRECTIONS
From Northcote car park turn left and left again on to the A59.

At the busy roundabout take the 2nd exit to Whalley. The road will take you through the village of Billington, across the River Calder and onto King Street in Whalley.

Keep straight ahead at a mini roundabout and then turn first left into Church Lane at the De Lacy Arms. This narrow lane will lead to The Sands and the main gateway of Whalley Abbey.

ON THE WAY...
This first stage of the route provides a sense of elevation which becomes even more obvious as the road dips down towards the River Calder. Here the township of Whalley is spread out before you with the impressive backdrop of the railway viaduct.

FOR SAT NAV USE - Whalley Abbey: BB7 9SS

POINTS OF INTEREST

The grounds of Whalley Abbey are open daily and offer a rewarding stroll close to the banks of the Calder. Today the main buildings are used as a Church of England Retreat and Conference Centre.

The original monastery was a Cistercian Foundation of the 14th century and fell into disuse following King Henry VIII’s break with the Church of Rome. The Abbey is one of Lancashire’s most important historical buildings. Of particular interest is the gatehouse a little further along The Sands.

ON THE WAY...
There is less elevation on this part of the route but a great deal of new housing and commercial park development is taking place. However, as you approach Clitheroe you’ll get sight of the castle keep, perched in its prominent position looking down on the town below.

This becomes Whalley Road passing through the growing village of Barrow. At the T-junction with the A671 turn left.

This will take you into Clitheroe. Once in the town centre bear left at the first roundabout into Moor Lane.

At the next mini roundabout bear left and, continue up the incline, passing the entrance to the Castle. Keep left where the road forks and join Parson Lane (one-way).

Follow to the next roundabout and turn right in Station Road. This takes you past Booths supermarket on the left and short and long stay car parks are clearly signposted.

STAGE 2 WHALLEY TO CLITHEROE CASTLE

3.7 MILES

FOR SAT NAV USE - Clitheroe Railway Station: BB7 2ED

POINTS OF INTEREST

Clitheroe is a bustling market town dominated to the north by the stack of Hanson’s cement works. The Castle is its other prominent landmark. The keep, built in the 12th century, is one of the smallest in the country and provides an outstanding viewpoint over the Ribble Valley and Pendle Hill. The castle houses an excellent museum providing the visitor with easy to absorb information about the history of the castle and town.
CLITHEROE TO SLAIDBURN 11.2 MILES

DIRECTIONS
From the station continue along Station Road and at the sharp right hand bend turn left onto the B6478 to Waddington.

Pass beneath the railway bridge and cross the River Ribble. In a little over half a mile the road arrives in the attractive village of Waddington. Keep ahead through the village and then at the Waddington Arms fork right onto Branch Road to reach West Bradford Road. Turn right.

Remain on this lane for two miles passing through West Bradford and continuing towards Grindleton. On the edge of Grindleton bear left up Grindleton Brow. As the road bears right into the village centre take the left turn immediately opposite the Buck Inn, signposted for Slaidburn.

Leaving the village in the direction of Slaidburn continue for a little under a mile and keep right to follow Smallden Lane.

Remain on this winding road for 4½ miles as it crosses the highest part of the route and descends towards the Hodder. Pass through Lane Ends and then 2 miles further on follow a right bend to meet the junction with the B6478 Settle Road. Turn left here and follow into Slaidburn.

POINTER OF INTEREST
In Slaidburn there are riverside walks easily accessed from the village car park. The most obvious is the one heading south along the banks of the River Hodder. The ancient Hark to Bounty Inn was the location of the area’s ‘moot court’ from the early 19th century to 1932. Customers can view the courtroom upstairs on request.

Whilst in Waddington Village visit the almshouses on West Bradford Road which feature a spacious green and 24 single storey cottages built in 1701.

ON THE WAY...
Waddington has the unusual distinction of winning “Best Kept Village” in both Lancashire and Yorkshire a feat achieved due to a local government reorganisation in 1974. On this part of the route Pendle Hill dominates the Ribble Valley. Passing through Grindleton the road climbs steeply over the watershed into the Hodder Valley with wide and spectacular views across to the Bowland Fells. Make use of a lay by at the summit of the road for a photo opportunity. This is a different aspect of Lancashire and one that is almost unknown outside the county.

FOR SAT NAV USE - Waddington: BB7 3HP - Slaidburn: BB7 3EP

SLAIDBURN TO WHITEWELL 6.5 MILES

DIRECTIONS
From the car park in Slaidburn turn right into the village. Pass the war memorial on the right and then keep left on B6478 which heads south passing through Newton and Dunsop Bridge.

After passing through Dunsop Bridge turn left at the next junction where the Trough Road comes in from Lancaster. Keep ahead along the valley crossing the Hodder at Burholme Bridge and then continuing to Whitewell.

ON THE WAY...
This is a delightful exploration of the Hodder valley. If you find yourself enchanted you are in good company for the area is reputed to be the Queen’s favourite part of her realm. The villages of Newton and Dunsop Bridge invite closer inspection on foot.

POINTS OF INTEREST
Dunsop Bridge, as determined by the map makers of the Ordnance Survey, is the nearest settlement to the centre of the United Kingdom. Getting to the exact location is a bit of a trek. For those who prefer more gentle strolls, Dunsop Bridge offers some charming riverside walks especially up the Dunsop Valley which is easily accessed from the bridleway adjacent to Puddleducks Cafe.

Behind the Inn at Whitewell, once the location of the forest court, stepping stones lead across the Hodder to the Limestone delights of Little Bowland.

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**FOR SAT NAV USE - All Hallows Church, Mitton: BB7 9PH**

**ON THE WAY...**
After leaving Whitewell via the steep climb of Hall Hill the route passes across pleasant pastureland to catch up with the Hodder beyond Bashall Eaves.

**POINTS OF INTEREST**

Browsholme Hall has been home to the Parker family since 1507. This historic house is often open to the public and features an extensive antique collection and wonderful, romantic gardens.

All Hallows is a noteworthy medieval church and opens at regular times for visitors. Opposite is the Three Fishes Inn.

**FOR SAT NAV USE - The Shireburn Arms, Hurst Green: BB7 9QJ**

**ON THE WAY...**
This simple part of the route transports you to Hurst Green, home to Stonyhurst College. The college is open to the public but only on very specific dates so if you want to explore in more information can be found by visiting the website: www.stonyhurst.ac.uk

**FOR SAT NAV USE - Northcote Hotel: BB6 8BE**

**ON THE WAY...**
Once across the river turn immediately left on a lane taking you past Salesbury Hall (on the left) and then onto the scattered settlement of Dinckley. On reaching a T junction turn left onto Old Langho Road. In half a mile turn right into Northcote Road which will return you to the hotel.
Our thanks to Bob Clare, David Johnstone and the Lancashire Walks team for devising this route.