Fresh air is nature’s best tonic...

...and as the seasons start to change it somehow feels like there is just a bit more of it. The skies are big, the views are far reaching and if you’re up early you might just find you’ve got it all to yourself.

Red hot

As the summer fades you get days where the air is still warm and the late sun is dappling through the trees. The woodland at Wallington is perfect for switching off and trying forest bathing – the Japanese feel good phenomenon that’s gone global. As autumn turns the trees every shade of red, look out for one of the resident red squirrels that have made these woods their home. And as the days get colder remember there’s always a hot chocolate waiting in the café with your name on it.

Kaleidoscopes of colour

Above your head and under your feet, the striking red Acer leaves, burnt orange beech and bright yellow hazel, mix with shiny brown conkers to make an autumn walk at Nostell pretty hard to beat. It’s not all about the fiery colours though; along the lake path deep blue adds the perfect contrast as big open skies filter through the trees and the occasional kingfisher darts across the lake.

Explore somewhere new

After being closed for two years, Wentworth Castle Gardens has recently re-opened with miles of parkland and gardens to explore. Meet the herds of red and fallow deer in the parkland that live alongside wild hares and great crested newts. And make sure you have your binoculars trained to the sky too as buzzards and kestrels soar overhead.

Soaked through

Some walks are just better in the rain and once you’re wet, you’re wet! Up in the Yorkshire Dales you can reach Janet’s Foss on a short walk through ancient woodland. As well as having all the gorgeous colours of autumn, the trees provide a natural umbrella too. The waterfall at the end is great for youngsters to experience the thrill, spray and thunder of a waterfall in full force for the first time.

Urban escape

At Gibside, replace the grey pavements of the city, the soothing from a passing car and the honk of rush hour horns for the crunch of red and orange leaves beneath your feet and the tooting of bird song. That loud drumming sound you can hear is more likely to be a woodpecker at work. Forget being stuck in rush hour traffic on the way home too, book a cosy yurt instead and have the place to yourself after everyone has headed home.

Misty mornings

The deer park at Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal opens from 6am so get here as early as you like and explore as the winter mist slowly lifts. The absolute quiet is the perfect time for nature spotting and it’s a great feeling to be full of fresh air and tucking into a breakfast butty at the café just as your day would often be getting started!

We’d love to hear what you’ve been up to. Join the adventure and share your top spots this season:

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You’ll find your autumn and winter

What’s on inside
If these walls could talk

If only trees could tell a story. Some have witnessed Roman invasion or are remnants of big changes in land use over the centuries. And, they’re all quietly getting on with providing a home to hundreds of insects, mammals, birds and fungi. From ancient to the tallest and the tiny, we care for some pretty special trees in the North.

Find Beatrix Potter's own Brambley Apple tree at Harewood, the Duke of Cambridge's Oak tree at Beningbrough Hall and ancient beech and oaks at Dunham Massey.

Our arboreal bucket list also includes the iconic Sycamore Gap at Madam's Hill which famously starred in 1995 film Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves.

The Dihorn Oak, in the Lake District, is one of the oldest trees on the Aonach Bank estate at around 1,500-2,000 years old. Despite this grand age it’s a young tree compared to one of Strathclyde’s ancient yew trees in Holmstall Wood which is estimated to be over 1,800 years old.

Towering in at 40 metres high, the country's tallest tree is a Scots pine at Cragside.

If you want to extend your adventure you can now step inside the historic wallow at Harewood, see the greatAVIS of the 19th-century Veltheim Mansion, watch the sun rise at Harewood and explore the impressive wallow at Beningbrough Hall.

Forget food miles, we’re talking food metres…

You can’t beat the taste of locally grown, seasonal produce. Autumn brings the chance to sample nature’s harvest, where the journey from plot to plate is often only footsteps.

Funding to repair much loved Penshaw Monument

The Grade I listed monument - a half-sized replica of the Temple of Vesta in Hadrian’s Villa - is full of heritage and history and the Grade I listed monument - a half-sized replica of the Temple of Vesta in Hadrian’s Villa - is full of heritage and history and is home to a large number of visitors each year.

At Beningbrough Hall the kitchen garden provides the Country Café with lots of fresh ingredients. Try the soup made using produce grown by Kitchen Gardener Mark or tuck into beetroot and chocolate cake.

Look out for: Nostell's pumpkin week running 21-27 October.

Cragside sources many of its ingredients from close to home too. All the eggs, butter, cheddar, potatoes and flour used in the kitchen come from farmers who live and work on the Cragside estate.

The celebrated Beningbrough Hall apple week makes use of the estate’s ancient apple trees to produce a traditional apple press and sample the fresh cider from the tree.

Did you know?

At Beningbrough Hall the gardens are happy for you to take any of the fruit and veg they grow that isn’t used in the restaurant, so you can also take the taste away with you. Just look out for the produce rack in the outdoor shop.

Help create some colour

Would you like to help save plant life? At Fountain's Abbey and Studley Royal? Come along on Wednesday 10 December and join the gardeners as we hope to plant 20,000 bulbs along the river from the abbey to the water garden.

nationaltrust.org.uk/fountains-abbey

Funding round-up

The North East is full of beauty spots with something for everyone from stunning beaches to historic estates and everything in between. Thanks to funding from National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Trust will continue to conserve and share these wonderful places for future generations to enjoy.

Cragside, Dunham Massey and the North East’s other historic houses enjoy one of the highest levels of visitors in the country.

Making Outdoor Christmas

Get a taste: Wallington's apple week make your own apple press and sample the fresh cider from the tree. You can’t beat the taste of locally grown, seasonal produce. Autumn brings the chance to sample nature’s harvest, where the journey from plot to plate is often only footsteps.

At Nunnington Hall, Father Christmas will soon be checking his list and getting his reindeer ready. Before the hard work starts, we caught up with a mince pie to get the low-down from the man himself.

Name: Father Christmas
Profession: Delivery service, sleigh pilot, and mince pie muncher
Age: 1,459 years young

What’s your favourite Christmas treat? I’m partial to a chocolate orange, so a big thank you to the Tillery family from Gosforth that my absolute favourite is the Christmas Pudding Scone served with a little buttery breton created at Treasurer’s House.

What’s your favourite Christmas Carol? Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer is my favourite, but I like to sing along to all carols. Any rights off from list checking I make sure I visit Fountain’s Abbey and Gibside for carols old and new.

For the full story of these and other fascinating places go to nationaltrust.org.uk/yorkshire and follow us on Twitter @National Trust Images/Stewart Smith

Five minutes with Father Christmas

Father Christmas will soon be checking his list and getting his reindeer ready. Before the hard work starts, we caught up with a mince pie to get the low-down from the man himself.

Name: Father Christmas
Profession: Delivery service, sleigh pilot, and mince pie muncher
Age: 1,459 years young
On the move

As autumn moves in, many animals across the North are seeking out new places to live. We look after habitats to suit even the most discerning of house hunters. Read on for a roundup of some of the best natural autumn and winter homes across the North...

Commuter convenience

The river network across the Lake District takes the hassle out of commuting for different types of fish, all the while enjoying the privilege of living in a World Heritage Site. The River Kent is a popular commuter route for salmon, ideally located for leaping out and spotting a glimpse of Sizergh as it winds it’s way upstream.

Bird-watching’s one thing but have you tried fish watching? Spot salmon leaping up river during autumn as they return to their breeding grounds to spawn. While enjoying the privilege of different types of fish, all the hassle out of commuting for the Lake District takes the convenience way upstream.

Winter time share

Meanwhile on the Mersey shoreline birds are flocking to Speke’s coastal reserve to take up their winter residences. This taste of coastal living at the edge of the city is a draw for godwits, teal, plover and more, with Speke Hall’s eye catching black-and-white exteriors and woodland walks right on the doorstep making this an attractive proposition.

Find out how we’re breathing life back into Seaton Delaval Hall and looking after the bats, on your next visit.

Places to hang out

Red squirrels at Formby get the best of both worlds with homes among the pine forest, naturally full of all the berries and seeds they could possibly need and unrivalled access to the popular beach right on the doorstep. Over at Wallington they can enjoy ranger-assisted living with catering and security provided by concierge Glen, all within the appealing setting of Wallington’s West Wood.

Join us at Wallington for Red Squirrel Month this September with talks, walks and activities to enjoy.

Rural retreat

For hedgehogs that have been through a difficult time, the loving care provided by the gardeners at Rufford Old Hall is exactly what’s needed.

After all that good home cooking has had the desired effect and the scales are tipping in the right direction, it’s time to venture into the woods and set up cosy new homes in the grounds.

Enjoy the blazing reds of autumn at Rufford (the hedgehogs have the right idea) and then treat yourself to a warm, homemade scone in the tea-room too.