

This is Wales.



This magazine is also available in Welsh and German. Visit Wales cannot guarantee the accuracy or reliability of the information in this publication and hereby disclaim any responsibility for any error, omission or misrepresentation. To the fullest extent permitted by law all liability for loss, disappointment, negligence or other damage caused by reliance on the information contained in this guide is excluded. You are advised to check all details and information with the business concerned before confirming a reservation. All rights reserved. Material in this publication must not be reproduced in any form without permission from the copyright owners – please contact Visit Wales. Opinions expressed in *This is Wales* are not necessarily those of Visit Wales.

This is Wales is published by Visit Wales, the Tourism and Marketing division of the Welsh Government 2016. Visit Wales, Welsh Government, QED Centre, Main Avenue, Treforest Industrial Estate, Treforest, Pontypridd CF37 5YR.

Print ISBN: 978-1-4734-7822-0
Digital ISBN: 978-1-4734-7821-3
Managing Editor: Iestyn George.
Editor: Charles Williams.
Contributors: Caroline Davies, Ben Miller, Ceri Cunningham, Iwan Edwards, Rachel Atherton, Julia Horton-Powdrill, Luke Hemfrey, Anand George.
Designed by Departures.
Printed by Deltor Communications Ltd.
Photography: Crown copyright (2016) Visit Wales.
Other photographic sources are credited throughout.
Cover illustration: Tamer Koseli.

We want people to have amazing experiences in Wales. If you’re heading for the hills, read up on local advice. If you’re hitting the beach, check the tides. If you’re clipping onto a 100mph (161km/h) zip wire, take advice from the instructors. They know their stuff. It’s common sense, really. So come and enjoy, stay safe... and #FindYourEpic.

This publication is also available in Braille, large-format print, and / or audio from Visit Wales. info@visitwales.com

Wales.
Year of Legends
2017

This is Wales.

04	Land of Legends
08	Epic Thinking
12	Major Events
14	Castle Country
16	Coast
20	Time Travel
24	Big Country
28	Food & Drink
32	Events Diary

Travel Handbook.

38	Where to start...
40	Betws-y-Coed
42	Beaumaris
44	Conwy
46	Blaenau Ffestiniog
48	Abersoch
50	Denbigh
52	Machynlleth
54	Aberystwyth
56	Llandrindod Wells
58	Cardigan
60	St Davids
62	Tenby
64	Laugharne
66	Llandeilo
68	Brecon
70	Abergavenny
72	Merthyr Tydfil
74	Swansea
76	Cowbridge
78	Cardiff

Useful Information.

82	Meet our holiday areas
84	Getting to Wales
86	Getting around Wales
88	Further information and FAQs
90	Map of Wales

04–37
This is Wales.

In 2017 we’re celebrating our epic past, present and future like never before, with attractions, events and activities at legendary locations across Wales. We’re immersing visitors in our epic story, and making new legendary experiences. This is our Year of Legends. And while we’re a land of castles and King Arthur, we’re also pretty nifty at high adventure and global events. Above all, Wales is a great place to enjoy here and now. This year we’re creating new legends. Come and find yours.

38–81
Travel Handbook.

But where to begin? To get you started, here are 20 places to visit in Wales in 2017. Think of it as a taster-menu of towns and cities, and their surrounding areas, ranging from the wonderful Isle of Anglesey to the buzz and bustle of Cardiff, Europe’s youngest capital city. In between, there’s enough coast, countryside and mountain to keep you exploring for... well, forever. We’ve suggested places to eat, drink, play and stay, but there are many others. Handily, they’re all on our website: visitwales.com.

82–91
Useful Information.

By this point in the magazine you’re completely sold on Wales, right? So you’re going to need some advice on how to get here and finding your way around. Here’s all the essential info about our 13 distinct holiday areas, travelling to / around Wales, and how to make sure you’re booking the best accommodation. We’ll give you a crash course in our lovely Welsh language, and explain what all those names on the signposts actually mean. And finally, you’ll be needing a map. Sorted.

Miner’s Track beside Llyn Llydaw, Crib Goch, Snowdonia

Wales. Yes, it's an ancient landscape, with history and myth wherever you look. It's a land of majestic mountains and mighty skies, fringed with a famously beautiful coastline. We speak a language that's a living link with King Arthur. But it's also a land of epic thinking and high adventure. Everywhere you go, there are bright new ideas, in very old places.

Land of Legends.

“

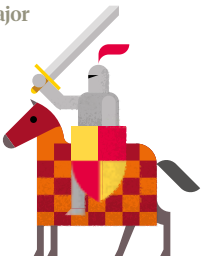
THE RED
DRAGON
HAS BEEN A
SYMBOL OF
WALES FOR
2,000 YEARS.

”

- 01
- Caerphilly Castle
- 02
- Llanddwyn Island
- 03
- Dame Shirley Bassey
- 04
- Designer Bethan Gray
- 05
- Principality Stadium, Cardiff



Owain Glyndŵr led a major rebellion in 1400–1415.



visitwales.com



Legends old and new. There are historical stories associated with just about every lake, rock and hill in Wales. There are modern Welsh legends too – people who have enriched the world with invention and creativity. Here are just a few of our favourites.

The red dragon

It's everywhere you look in Wales: the red dragon has been a symbol of Wales for 2,000 years, the banner of Celtic tribes, Welsh princes and Tudor kings. Legend speaks of an epic battle between a red and white dragon beneath a castle, while historians point to the Romans. Either way, it's a *very* pretty flag.

St Dwynwen

Princess Dwynwen was unlucky in love, so became a nun and prayed for young lovers to have better luck than she did. And so St Dwynwen became the Welsh patron saint of lovers, whose day we honour every year on 25 January. Llanddwyn Island on Anglesey is a magical spot where you can visit the beautiful ruins of Llanddwyn Church.

St David

St David's Day, 1 March, is a big deal in Wales, and we celebrate our patron saint in school eisteddfodau, concerts and street parades. St David was a 5th-century bishop who founded the present-day cathedral in Pembrokeshire and several monasteries in Wales and Brittany.

King Arthur

Legend has it that Arthur was a British warrior who fought the invading Saxons around AD500. Within a few hundred years, he was being celebrated in Welsh poems and folk legends, acquiring a supernatural sidekick, Merlin the wizard.

Owain Glyndŵr

The warrior prince, immortalised in Shakespeare's *Henry IV Part 1*, led the last major rebellion against the English in the early 1400s, before mysteriously vanishing.

Carn Ingli

The 'mountain of angels' has panoramic views of both the Pembrokeshire coast and Preseli Hills, from where the bluestones that helped to build Stonehenge came.

Principality Stadium

Okay, the stadium has been rebuilt. But this is still the hallowed ground on which Gareth Edwards scored THAT try for the Barbarians against New Zealand in 1973, and where Welsh football legend Ian Rush scored his iconic goal in 1991 when Wales beat World Champions Germany.

Modern greats

Welsh men and women have made a big impact on world culture. Actors like Richard Burton, Sir Anthony Hopkins and Catherine Zeta Jones, singers Sir Tom Jones and Dame Shirley Bassey, and Paralympic legend Dame Tanni Grey-Thompson. Literary giants Dylan Thomas and Roald Dahl, fashion icon Laura Ashley, the philosopher Bertrand Russell – and 16 signatories of the US Declaration of Independence were of Welsh descent.

Legends in the making

A new generation of Welsh men and women have taken to the global stage. Actors Michael Sheen, Matthew Rhys, Ioan Gruffudd, Iwan Rheon and Erin Richards. Bryn Terfel, the finest bass baritone of the modern era. Sports stars like Gareth Bale, Jade Jones and Sir Dave Brailsford. The designer Bethan Gray and CERN physicist Lyn Evans. Experts in their field, every one.

Dame Shirley Bassey by Popperfoto / Getty Images.

Epic Thinking.

Zip World Titan, Blaenau Ffestiniog

Take a piece of Wales, add a splash of imagination, and make something amazing. Where nature has given us mountains, cliffs and forests, we’ve made adventure playgrounds. There are ancient mazes, woodland music festivals, races up (and down) our tallest mountains... Our ideas get bigger and bolder every year. Now, people from all over the world come to fly along the world’s fastest zip wire over an old slate quarry and ride perfect waves down a Welsh valley. Here is a taster of the countless adventures you can enjoy in Wales.

Five adventure playgrounds.

- 01—
Zip World
Ex-Royal Marine Commando Sean Taylor and his team have created 11 adventures in three wonderful locations in North Wales, including the world’s fastest zip wire, which is also suitable for wheelchair users by prior arrangement.
zipworld.co.uk
- 02—
Surf Snowdonia
Every minute, a perfect 6ft-high (2m) wave barrels down a valley in Snowdonia. This used to be an old aluminium factory; now it’s a surfers’ paradise.
surfsnowdonia.co.uk
- 03—
BikePark Wales
We already had some of the world’s best mountain bike trails, and this park in the South Wales valleys is built by riders for riders, opening the sport to everyone from extreme to serene.
bikeparkwales.com

- 04—
Bounce Below
In a cathedral-sized slate cavern in North Wales, three layers of bouncy cargo nets are connected by slides and ladders. It’s a magical experience.
zipworld.co.uk
- 05—
Cardiff International White Water
Yes, we’ve got rapids on our rivers. But these Olympic-standard ones roar and tumble through the man-made course in Cardiff Bay, which is ideal for rafting and kayak adventures.
ciww.com

II

BIG
ADVENTURES
IN BEAUTIFUL
PLACES.

II

- 01
- 02–03
- 04
- 05
- Cliff camping
- Canoeing on the River Wye
- Abereiddy
- Surfability UK



Cliff camping image courtesy of Gaia Adventures.



Adventures in Wales.
Everyone’s idea of adventure is different, but you needn’t have the resting heart rate of an Olympic athlete to enjoy an adventure in Wales. Here is a small selection of the options for you to explore.

Brailsford Way

Sir Dave Brailsford is a legend of British cycling, and two stunning cycle routes, 50 and 75 miles long (80 and 121km), take in all the sights of his native Snowdonia. visitsnowdonia.info

Cliff camping

This is wild camping at its wildest: spend the night on a portaledge, suspended in mid-air, high on the sea cliffs of Anglesey. gaiaadventures.co.uk

Welsh Highland Railway

The classiest way to travel through Snowdonia, up through the beautiful Aberglaslyn Pass and into the foothills of Snowdon itself. All trains come with wheelchair ramps as standard. festrail.co.uk

Pontcysyllte Aqueduct

The Llangollen Canal soars over Britain’s biggest aqueduct. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, there’s nothing between you and the River Dee far below except a great deal of fresh Welsh air. pontcysyllte-aqueduct.co.uk

The Welsh Highland Railway is the UK’s longest heritage railway.



Canyoning

Gorge walking, gorge scrambling, canyoning... whatever you call it, this is a fabulously fun way to explore our mountain rivers. ‘Waterfall Country’ in the Brecon Beacons is a great place to try it. breconbeacons.org

Canoe safari

Britain doesn’t have a prettier river than the Wye, and the whole 100 miles (161km) from Glasbury to Chepstow is navigable – and a gentle 5.5-mile (8.9km) paddle around Hay-on-Wye is a perfect taster. hay-on-wye.co.uk

Coasteering

This adventure sport was invented here in Wales: it’s an exhilarating mix of swimming, scrambling and jumping along the coast, notably at the Blue Lagoon in Abereiddy. It’s open for all, too: Celtic Quest can tailor an adventure to suit just about any learning and / or physical disability. visitpembrokeshire.com celticquestcoasteering.com

Surfability UK

Surfability’s mission is to make surfing fun and inclusive for people with disabilities. Their specially-adapted lessons can be held on the indoor wave at Swansea’s LC2 leisure centre or out on Gower’s beautiful beaches. surfabilityukcic.org



Major Events.

Euro 2016 Homecoming, Cardiff

Welsh events with a global audience.

Wales does events on a grand scale: global gatherings like the Ryder Cup, NATO Summit and Rugby World Cup, as well as regulars like Hay Festival, Green Man, Festival No.6 and the National Eisteddfod. We love sport, whether it's an Ironman or Velothon, or international rugby in one of the world's best stadiums. Here are a few 2017 highlights, including the world's most watched annual sporting event: the UEFA Champions League Final.

**25 May–4 June, Hay-on-Wye
Hay Festival**

Celebrating its 30th anniversary, Hay gathers the world's greatest writers and thinkers, with 900+ events over 10 days. There's also great food and drink, lovely scenery, and plenty of books, of course. hayfestival.com

**3 June, Cardiff
UEFA Champions League Final**

The biggest club match in world sport comes to our national stadium in Cardiff for a spectacular weekend of football, fan zones, live entertainment and music. The 2016 / 17 UEFA Women's Champions League Final will also be played in Wales for the first time, at Cardiff City Stadium, on 1 June. uefa.com

**9 July, Cardiff
Velothon Wales**

This fantastic sportive runs for 87 miles (140km) through spectacular scenery, where you'll be cheered along closed roads right to the city-centre finish. There's a 68-mile (110km) version which omits the hefty Tumble climb. velothon.ironman.com

**26–30 July, Royal Porthcawl
Senior Open Championship**

The legends of golf compete for this coveted trophy at one of our most magnificent courses, with sea views from every hole. europeantour.com/seniortour

**17–20 August, Crickhowell
Green Man Festival**

Green Man's gorgeous rural setting brings in 1,500 performers, with 24-hour events, comedy, poetry, literature, wildlife walks, and some of the best music around, from cutting-edge contemporary stars to venerable legends. greenman.net

**3–10 September
Tour of Britain**

Britain's premier cycling race comes to Wales every year, usually for its toughest stages. The route isn't confirmed yet, but hill climbs will certainly feature. tourofbritain.co.uk

**26–29 October
Wales Rally GB**

The British leg of the FIA World Rally Championship takes place over three thrilling days in some of Wales' most stunning scenery. walesrallygb.com

Castle Country.

Beaumaris Castle, Anglesey

visitwales.com

Castell Coch had its own vineyard until 1920.



Ten Welsh Castles.

There are more castles per square mile in Wales than anywhere else on Earth. They come in all shapes, sizes, and states of repair. Some have been lived in continuously for a thousand years, others are tumbledown ruins in remote forests. Here is a selection of them, each with its own rich history and legends.

01— Caernarfon Edward I began work on Caernarfon Castle in the 1280s, and it was designed to impress, with huge polygonal towers and colour-coded bands of stone. It's part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site that includes Beaumaris, Conwy and Harlech castles, and the fortified town walls at Conwy and Caernarfon.	06— Criccieth This is a perfect spot for a castle: perched on a headland between two beaches. The original was built by Llywelyn the Great, then added to by Edward I, and finally set on fire by Owain Glyndŵr in his 1404 rebellion.
02— Beaumaris The most technically perfect castle in Britain, even though Edward I never quite got round to finishing it. The ingenious 'walls within walls' plan is still mightily impressive today.	07— Raglan Raglan is as much a palace as a fortress, and it's full of Tudor mod-cons. These days, it's particularly good for events and activities.
03— Conwy Another masterpiece by Edward I's builder, James of St George. The castle still utterly dominates the town, which has one of the finest sets of town walls in Europe, with 21 towers and three gateways.	08— Castell Coch These fairytale turrets were built on ancient foundations in the 19th century by the Marquess of Bute as a rural retreat from his main residence, Cardiff Castle. The Gothic Revival interior is dazzling.
04— Harlech If the huge fortress looks slightly marooned on its rocky plinth, that's because the sea has retreated over the last 700 years (handily, leaving room for Royal St David's, one of our best golf courses).	09— Kidwelly Just outside the gatehouse is a memorial to Princess Gwenllïan, killed leading an army against the Normans in 1136. More recently, Kidwelly starred in the opening scene of <i>Monty Python and the Holy Grail</i>.
05— Caerphilly This biggest castle in Wales ticks all the boxes: mighty towers (with a greater lean than Pisa), a Great Hall and drawbridge, siege engines that actually work, all surrounded by elaborate water defences.	10— Chirk Castle Completed in 1310, this is the last Welsh castle from the reign of Edward I that's still lived in today. The many splendours from its 700-year history are set in lovely award-winning gardens.
Cadw and the National Trust are committed to providing full access for all abilities, wherever practical. cadw.gov.wales nationaltrust.org.uk	

The 870-mile (1,400km) Wales Coast Path is the longest continuous coastal path in the world, running the entire length of our coastline. Every cove and clifftop comes with legends of pirates and smugglers, shipwrecks and saints, lost villages and sand-swamped castles – and around 230 beaches. Off the coast, 50 islands teem with birds, while the clear waters are home to seals, porpoises and the UK's largest pod of bottlenose dolphins.

walescoastpath.gov.uk

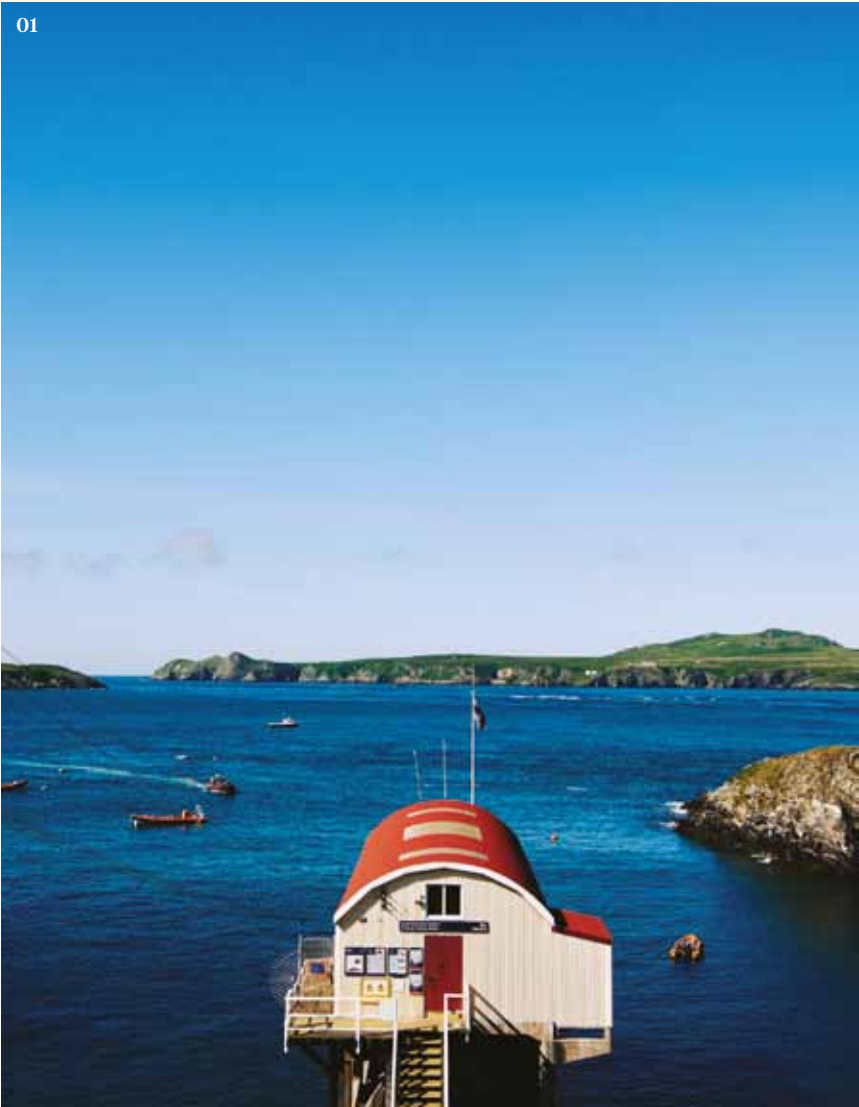
Coast.

||

SOME OF THE
WORLD’S
GREATEST
WILDLIFE
SANCTUARIES.

||

- 01 Ramsey Island
- 02–03 Mwnt
- 04–05 Skomer Island
- 06 Caldey Island crossing



A shore thing.
Our beaches are among the cleanest and safest in the world, while our islands are places of natural wonder. This is just a flavour of the coastal wonders of Wales.

Porth Oer, Llŷn Peninsula

This crescent-shaped cove on the wild north coast of Llŷn is famous for its ‘whistling sands’, which squeak as you walk on them (one of only two such beaches in Europe).
[visitsnowdonia.info](#)

Barafundle, Pembrokeshire

It’s a half-mile (800m) walk from Stackpole Quay to this perfect little bay, one of the prettiest in Wales. There’s something almost tropical about the pristine stretch of sand, backed by dunes and pine trees.
[visitpembrokeshire.com](#)

Rhossili, Gower

Rhossili has been named the best beach in the UK, and often makes global top-tens. The vast beach has its own shipwreck, and the walk out to Worm’s Head is an absolute classic.
[visitswanseabay.com](#)

Mwnt, Ceredigion

The beach at Mwnt is impossibly pretty, and if you climb the headland, past the ancient white-washed chapel, you may well spot seals, dolphins and porpoises.
[discoverceredigion.co.uk](#)

Llanddwyn Island, Anglesey

A walk out through a nature reserve leads to the most wildly romantic spot in Wales, a tidal island (rarely cut off) with its own lighthouse and shrine to the Welsh patron saint of lovers, St Dwynwen.
[visitanglesey.co.uk](#)

Beach wheelchairs

Pembrokeshire has 18 ‘easy access’ beaches for the less mobile, including six with special beach wheelchairs for hire.
[pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk](#)

Flat Holm Island, nr Cardiff

It’s just five miles (8km) from Cardiff city centre, but Flat Holm has been used by pirates, smugglers, miners and soldiers. Now it is a tranquil nature reserve (albeit with its own small pub, the Gull & Leek) for day-trips and overnight stays.
[flatholmisland.com](#)

Caldey Island, nr Tenby

Seabirds and Cistercian monks are the main residents of this little island. Explore the wide expanse of sand at Priory Bay and sample the perfume and other aromatic delights sold by the monks.
[caldey-island.co.uk](#)

Ramsey Island, nr St Davids

The 400 foot-high (120m) cliffs are the perfect place for seabirds in spring and early summer, while autumn is best for seal pups. A boat trip takes you over a white-water reef called The Bitches to a lovely 3.5-mile (5.6km) circular walk around the island.
[rspb.org.uk](#)

Skomer Island, nr Broad Haven

Together with its neighbour, Skokholm, these form the most significant single wildlife habitat in Wales, with globally-important populations of Manx shearwaters and puffins. You can stay overnight on both islands, or visit Skomer for the day. Utterly magical.
[welshwildlife.org](#)

Bardsey Island, Llŷn Peninsula

The ‘Island of 20,000 saints’ has long been a spiritual refuge, as well as a wildlife sanctuary for grey seals, puffins, Manx shearwaters and many others. It even has its own variety of apple, thought to date back 1,000 years.
[bardsey.org](#)

Time Travel.

St Fagans National History Museum, nr Cardiff

visitwales.com

People have left their mark on the Welsh landscape since prehistory. Here is a small selection of the heritage sites dotted all over Wales – often in the prettiest places.

Ten past masters.

01—

Castell Henllys, Pembrokeshire

The only Iron Age village in Britain, reconstructed on the exact site where our Celtic ancestors lived around 2,400 years ago. There are lots of hands-on activities to try in a gorgeous National Park setting. castellhenllys.com

02—

Dolaucothi Gold Mines, Pumsaint

The Romans first mined here on an industrial scale 2,000 years ago. The mine closed in the 1930s, but visitors can still take an underground tour and have a bash at panning for gold. nationaltrust.org.uk

03—

Copper Kingdom, Amlwch

The northernmost town in Wales was the hub of the copper industry, which has left some pretty impressive remains, notably at the stunning moonscape of Parys Mountain. copperkingdom.co.uk

04—

Blaenavon Ironworks

Once one of the biggest ironworks in the world, and now part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Blaenavon Ironworks combines hulking relics and restored cottages to give a vivid window into the workers' lives. cadw.gov.wales

05—

Plas Newydd, Llanfair PG (short for Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwlllantysiliogogoch)

This elegant house on the shores of the Menai Strait contains the largest collection of Rex Whistler's works, a military museum, and a fine spring garden. nationaltrust.org

06—

Erddig, nr Wrexham

Fascinating insights into the upstairs-downstairs life of an 18th-century gentry family, along with a superb formal garden and romantic landscape park. nationaltrust.org

07—

Llanerchaeron, Aberaeron

This delightful 18th-century Welsh gentry estate has a spectacular walled garden and a passion for self-sufficient living (and a farm shop for any surplus goodies). nationaltrust.org

08—

St Davids Cathedral

The HQ of our patron saint is built on the site of a monastery he founded in the 6th century. It's a lovely place to visit at any time, and especially during the annual music festival in late May / early June. stdavidscathedral.org.uk

09—

Tintern Abbey

This Cistercian masterpiece is the best-preserved medieval abbey in Wales. Its sheer beauty, and that of the surrounding Wye Valley, has inspired poets and artists for centuries. cadw.gov.wales

10—

St Winefride's Well, Holywell

Pilgrims have taken the healing waters here since the 12th century, and modern pilgrims can still bathe in the well pool. The present shrine dates from the 16th century, and a museum tells the (rather grisly) story of how it sprang into being. saintwinefrideswell.com

A brief history of Welsh.

You'll see and hear the Welsh language everywhere you go in Wales. It's on all the road signs, and in every public building and supermarket. It's the everyday language in shops, pubs and online, and in thousands of daily business and social interactions.

So in many ways, Welsh is just an ordinary part of our daily lives. But it's also a vital part of who we are as a people. The language is the key to our literature, history and sense of nationhood. It's directly descended from the Brythonic tongue that was spoken by the Celtic people who lived in Britain when the Romans arrived in AD43.

Since then, the language has been pushed to the western fringes of Britain by successive invasions. In fact, the earliest Welsh literature deals with King Arthur and battles against the Saxons. But the Welsh language survived – and, thanks to Bishop William Morgan's translation of the Bible in 1588, even thrived. The National Eisteddfod was founded in 1861, followed by the University of Wales in 1893, the National Library of Wales in 1911, Plaid Cymru (the Party of Wales) in 1925, and the Welsh Language Society (Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg) in 1962.

Since 1999 we've had our own devolved Welsh Government, and around 20% of the population speak Welsh – that's around half a million people.

- 01–03
- St Fagans National History Museum
- 04
- National Museum Cardiff
- 05
- Artes Mundi, National Museum Cardiff
- 06
- National Wool Museum



National treasures.

We've got a magnificent seven National Museums spread all over the country, covering every aspect of Welsh history in incredibly rich detail, as well as world-class collections from Wales and around the globe. What's more, it's free admission for all.

National Museum Cardiff	National Slate Museum, Llanberis
One of Europe's finest art collections takes a trip with dinosaurs, mammoths and thousands of animal and plant species: a journey that takes you from the Big Bang to the present day. Go before the end of February and you'll catch the UK's biggest art prize, Artes Mundi. museum.wales/cardiff	The vast Dinorwig quarry's Victorian workshops tell the gripping story of how slate changed the landscape and people. It's largely staffed by ex-miners, who bring the whole story vividly to life. museum.wales/slate
St Fagans National History Museum, nr Cardiff	National Roman Legion Museum, Caerleon
This fabulous open-air museum is Wales' most popular heritage attraction, featuring 40 original buildings relocated to 100 woodland acres (40ha) in the grounds of a 16th-century manor house. museum.wales/stfagans	In AD75, the Romans built a fortress that would guard this region for 200 years. The ruins include Britain's most complete amphitheatre and the only Roman Legionary barracks on view in Europe. museum.wales/roman
National Waterfront Museum, Swansea	National Wool Museum, Dre-fach Felindre
This hi-tech museum celebrates the mining, metal-working and transport technologies that changed the world, and showcases big new ideas on how Welsh science is helping to shape the future. museum.wales/swansea	There are three times as many sheep as people in Wales, and this friendly museum, set in the old Cambrian Mills, tells the fascinating story of the Welsh wool industry from fleece to fabric. museum.wales/wool
Big Pit National Coal Museum, Blaenavon	
A living, breathing tribute to the coal industry and the society it created. There's lots to explore in the old colliery buildings, and you can descend 295 foot (90m) underground with a real ex-miner. museum.wales/bigpit	All of our National Museums are committed to providing full access for all abilities, wherever practical.

Big Country.

Elan Valley, Mid Wales

We’re big on wide-open spaces. A fifth of the country is National Park land. We’ve got five Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and great expanses of forest and woodland. There are two major mountain ranges – Snowdonia and the Brecon Beacons – with several lesser (but no less beautiful) uplands, which fall away into broad river valleys. In other words, there are epic landscapes around every bend. Here’s a sample, just waiting for you to explore.

Six epic walks.

01—
Pen y Fan, nr Brecon
The highest point in the Brecon Beacons, which this year celebrates its 60th birthday as a National Park. The beauty of Pen y Fan is that it’s easy to get to – just 40 minutes from Cardiff – and easy enough for children to manage. It still feels like a proper mountain, though: there’s a reason the SAS does their training here.
breconbeacons.org

02—
Tryfan, nr Capel Curig
Tryfan looks like a giant stegosaurus, its spiny back rising dramatically from the side of the A5 in the Ogwen Valley. It’s a short, sharp scramble to the top, marked by two massive stone pillars called Adam and Eve.
eryri-npa.gov.uk

03—
Cader Idris, nr Dolgellau
The ‘armchair’ of the legendary giant Idris is a spectacular horseshoe around the glacial lake of Llyn Cau, which is as good a place as any for a picnic and a paddle on a fine day.
eryri-npa.gov.uk

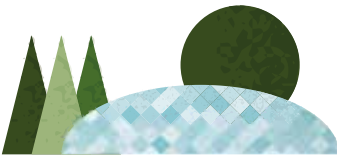
04—
Offa’s Dyke Trail
The Trail meanders along the entire length of the Wales-England border, following the 8th-century Offa’s Dyke earthwork for the middle 70 miles (113km).
nationaltrail.co.uk/offas-dyke-path

05—
The Cambrian Way
A 291-mile (468km) stroll from Conwy to Cardiff, taking in the highest and wildest parts of Wales, bagging all the biggest peaks along the way – that’s around 50 mountains.
cambrianway.org.uk

06—
Elan Valley, nr Rhayader
The Elan Valley reservoirs were built by the Victorians to supply water to the English Midlands, and they lie among 72 square miles (116km square) of the least spoilt landscapes in Wales. The nine-mile (14km) Elan Valley Trail allows good access for walkers, cyclists, horse-riders and wheelchairs.
elanvalley.org.uk

“
YOU CAN’T
IMPROVE
ON NATURE –
BUT
SOMETIMES
IT’S FUN
TO TRY.
”

”



Green spaces.
So, how do you like your landscape?
Raw and untamed, or gently enhanced by the
gardener’s expert hand? Here are just a few
wild places and glorious gardens to enjoy.

**National Botanic Garden of Wales,
Llanarthney**

The Middleton estate had some of the
finest landscape parks and water gardens
in Britain, set in one of our most beautiful
valleys. Today it’s a skilful blend of the
historic and ultra-modern, including the
world’s biggest single-span glasshouse.
botanicgarden.wales

Colby Woodland Garden, nr Amroth

Set in a secret valley, this informal
woodland garden is a terrific example
of a gardener working to enhance what
nature’s already provided. Remarkably,
a century ago this wildlife haven used
to be a coal mine.
nationaltrust.org.uk

Bodnant Garden, nr Colwyn Bay

Bodnant Hall comes with terraced gardens
and informal lawns, while the lower
Dell is formed by the valley of the River
Hiraethlyn and contains the fabulous wild
garden. Family trails and regular events
keep children amused, and the estate
cottages have been transformed into
stylish holiday lets.
bodnantgarden.co.uk

Abergwesyn, nr Tregaron

This just could be Wales’ loneliest road:
a ribbon of tarmac runs from Llanwrtyd
Wells to Tregaron through a wild
landscape of moors, escarpment, pine
forest and rippling streams.
nationaltrust.org.uk

**Plas Cadnant Hidden Gardens,
Menai Bridge**

This ‘lost’ 19th-century garden was
rescued in the 1990s, and its beautifully
restored treasures include a walled garden,
a secret valley garden with three waterfalls
and a river, and a woodland garden with
a ruined folly.
plascadnant.co.uk

Arenig, nr Bala

This range is far less well-known than
many of Snowdonia’s peaks, but has
a magnetic pull for those in the know.
In 1911 the artists Augustus John and
James Dickson Innes fled London to
live and paint here for a few years,
creating an extraordinary body of work.
visitbala.org.uk

At its best, Welsh food is simple: first-rate ingredients, cooked with skill by passionate people. We're justly famous for lamb, but there's also Welsh Black beef, champion cheeses, and great seafood from our winding coastline. Family recipes for *cawl* are passed down through generations, but we also devour new influences, brew great beer, and make award-winning wine (yes, really).

Food & Drink.

“

THE BEST HOME-GROWN INGREDIENTS, COOKED SIMPLY AND WITH PASSION.

”

- 01–02 Coastal Foraging
- 03 Baked Golden Cenarth cheese
- 04 Catch of the day
- 05 Wright’s Food Emporium
- 06 Pipes brewery



visitwales.com

A flavour of Wales.
Here’s a selection of the rich and varied gastronomic experiences that make the most of our abundant natural resources.

The seven stars

We’re rather proud that the 2017 *Michelin Guide* has honoured a record seven Welsh restaurants with stars. It’s not all about winning gongs, of course. But these seven stars do say something about the vibrant health of our culinary scene. And they are all, in their own way, utterly wonderful.
viamichelin.co.uk

Wright’s Food Emporium, Llanarthney

A temple to all things edible, imbibable and, above all, delicious. Wright’s is a top-notch café and deli, with a strong showing of natural wines. The regular guest-chef nights are legendary.
wrightsfood.co.uk

Rhug Estate, Corwen

Lord Newborough’s organic lamb and beef grace the plates of the world’s best restaurants. His herd of bison began as a ruse to lure passers-by into the palatial farm shop (but they also make splendid burgers).
rhug.co.uk

Say cheese

Turophiles (that’s cheese-lovers) are spoilt for choice, but may care to start with Caws Cenarth’s creamy Perl Wen and blue-veined Perl Las, before moving on to Caws Teifi’s pungent Celtic Promise, Britain’s most highly-awarded cheese.
cawscenarth.co.uk
teificheese.co.uk

Iechyd da!*

Most pubs now stock at least one beer, cider or perry that was brewed around the corner (possibly in a shed). Gwaun Valley, Kite, Gower, Pipes, Crafty Devil, Tiny Rebel, Bluestone, Purple Moose, Hallets, Gwynt y Ddraig, Morfa Nefyn... consult your friendly local barperson for further details. (*Cheers!)

Still here

Welsh distilleries were drummed out by non-conformist religious fervour in the 19th century, and have only sneaked back in the 21st. The leading light is Penderyn Distillery, which makes terrific whisky in the foothills of the Brecon Beacons.
welsh-whisky.co.uk

Seaweed, eat weed

Laverbread – that’s seaweed, cooked to a green-black paste – is an unlikely national breakfast dish, but we love it. It also features strongly on the menu at Café Môr, a charming shack on Freshwater West beach. Lobster roll, anyone?
beachfood.co.uk

Take your pick

Wales is a really good place for foragers. We’ve got all the right habitats (coast, forests, unspoilt countryside) and loads of enthusiastic people to teach you.
originaloutdoors.co.uk
wildpickings.co.uk

Pembrokeshire Fish Week

Held annually on the cusp of June / July, this whopper of a festival has more than 250 events celebrating the county’s great seafood and beautiful coastline.
pembrokeshirefishweek.co.uk

Sparkling performance

Yes, the climate can be a challenge. But in a good year, Welsh vineyards can produce genuinely classy wines. Ancre Hill Estate make a really good Pinot Noir in Monmouthshire – and their 2008 vintage won best sparkling wine in the *world* in Italy’s Bollicine del Mondo competition.
ancrehillstates.co.uk



Events Diary 2017. Joining in with our Year of Legends celebrations is just one of the many marks to make in your diary for the 12 months ahead.

Check out the website for more: visitwales.com

JANUARY

1 January
New Year’s Day Swim
This New Year, we resolve to get our kit off and jump in the sea, for charity. The Saundersfoot event is big on fancy dress, while Barry Islanders tend to favour the less-is-more dress code. Brrrr. saundersfootnyds.co.uk facebook.com/BarryIslandNewYearDaySwim

14 January
World MTB Chariot Racing Championships & Saturnalia Real Ale Ramble, Llanwrtyd Wells
Saturnalia was the Romans’ big winter bash. The Welsh version involves racing chariots, powered by a pair of mountain bikers, who are in turn fuelled by beer. green-events.co.uk

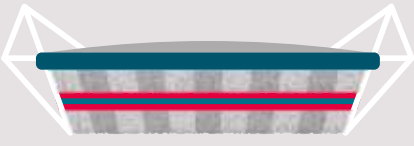
25 January
Dydd Santes Dwynwen
St Dwynwen’s Day is the special day for Welsh lovers, named after our patron saint of love, Dwynwen. She was a 5th-century princess who fell in love with the wrong chap, and ended up living a pious life as a nun on Llanddwyn Island, praying that other lovers have better luck than she did. In her honour, cards are exchanged, and longing glances are cast over candle-lit dinners.

January–26 February
Artes Mundi, Cardiff
The UK’s leading international contemporary art prize brings together a major biennial exhibition of the world’s most celebrated contemporary artists. The shortlist of six artists was selected from over 700 nominations from 90 countries, and the winner (announced on 26 January 2017) takes away £40,000, the UK’s largest art cash prize.
Between them, the artists tackle the big global issues of migration, technology, ecology, capitalism and politics, in fascinating and mind-bending exhibitions split over two locations, the National Museum Cardiff and Chapter.

If you’ll permit us a little local bias, we love Bedwyr Williams’s *Tyrrau Mawr*, a huge digital projection that imagines a mad new city around the Snowdonia mountain of Cader Idris. artesmundi.org

FEBRUARY

11 February
RBS 6 Nations: Wales v England, Cardiff
Let’s be honest. This is still the Big One for a lot of Welsh rugby fans. Eddie Jones has brought an admirable streak of ruthlessness to England, so this should be a humdinger. principalitystadium.wales



The Principality Stadium seats 74,500 spectators.

MARCH

1 March
St David’s Day
We celebrate our Patron Saint’s day with a big parade through Cardiff, and there are several similar events in Aberystwyth, Wrexham and Llandudno. Blend into the crowds by wearing a leek and / or daffodil. stdavidsday.org

10 March
RBS 6 Nations: Wales v Ireland, Cardiff
Friday night fixtures aren’t everyone’s cup of tea (or Guinness). But Cardiff is still the best city for a cracking night out, punctuated by 80 minutes of frantic Celt-on-Celt rugby action. principalitystadium.wales

APRIL

7–9 April
RHS Cardiff Flower Show
The Royal Horticultural Society welcomes spring and kick-starts the gardening season in Cardiff for its first major outdoor show of the year. rhs.org.uk

7–9 April
The Laugharne Weekend
Like the town itself, this is a quirkily brilliant festival. Imagine being in the pub when all the coolest cult novelists, musicians, thinkers and controversialists turn up at the same time. thelaugharneweekend.com

8 April–3 September
Gillian Ayres, Cardiff
A major exhibition at the National Museum Cardiff, celebrating the bold and colourful work of one of Britain’s most renowned abstract artists. This is the largest exhibition of Ayres’ work ever seen in the UK. museum.wales/cardiff

22–23 April
Wonderwool, Builth Wells
The annual wool and natural fibre extravaganza bursts at the seams with stalls, exhibitions, daily demonstrations and have-a-go sessions. wonderwoolwales.co.uk

28–30 April
Machynlleth Comedy Festival
The festival has a friendly, homespun feel, but also attracts the biggest stars in British comedy. The 2016 line-up featured the likes of Stewart Lee, Rob Newman and Josh Widdicombe – but also lots of new talent. Top comedy and cutting-edge performance in a beautiful setting. machcomedyfest.co.uk

28 April–1 May
Llandudno Victorian Extravaganza
A Victorian street fair with old-time rides and stalls, steam engines, street entertainers, marching bands and a daily street parade with revellers dressed in period costume. victorian-extravaganza.com



29 April–1 May
Llangollen Walking Festival
Offering short, medium and long walks with professional guides who’ll share local history, heritage and folk tales in spectacular landscapes. llangollenwalkingfestival.co.uk

29 April–25 June
Frank Brangwyn, Swansea
Sir Frank was a painter, engraver, illustrator and progressive designer. A major collection is being shown at the National Waterfront Museum. museum.wales/swansea

April (date tbc)
Cardiff Children’s Literature Festival
After the rip-roaring success of Roald Dahl’s City of the Unexpected in 2016, children’s literature will be centre-stage in Cardiff again, with two weekends of events. cardiff-events.com

April (date tbc)
Hay Dark Skies Festival, Hay-on-Wye
There are just 11 International Dark Sky Reserves in the world, and two of them – Snowdonia National Park and the Brecon Beacons National Park – are in Wales. Light pollution is carefully controlled to reveal celestial bodies at their sparkliest. darkskiesfestival.org

MAY

1 May
Calan Mai
The Celts celebrated 1 May as an *ysbrydnos* (or ‘spirit night’), when the veil between the human and spirit worlds was at its thinnest. These days, it brings folk musicians out to haunt local pubs. visitwales.com

1–31 May
Diffusion, Cardiff
The Cardiff International Festival of Photography has a month of exhibitions, discussions, screenings, performances and events. diffusionfestival.org

11–13 May
FOCUS Wales, Wrexham
The seventh annual festival for new bands, with a side-order of comedy and film. Last year it drew more than 7,000 people to see 200+ bands in several venues. focuswales.com

13 May
Welsh Three Peaks Challenge
A tough tour of the iconic peaks of Snowdon, Cader Idris and Pen y Fan, with transport in between, and all in less than 24 hours. They also run the same event on 19 August and 7 October. threepeakschallenge.uk/ welsh-three-peaks-challenge

14 May
Dylan Day
An international day to celebrate the poet Dylan Thomas, held on the date *Under Milk Wood* was first read on stage in New York in 1953. There’ll be special events all over Wales and the world. literaturewales.org

20–21 May
Snowdonia Slateman Triathlon, Llanberis
A swim surrounded by mountains, a bike ride around Snowdonia and a run through an awesome slate quarry. There are Sprint and Full courses... or do both to become a Slateman Savage. snowdoniaslateman.com

22–30 May
Aberystwyth Cycle Festival
Watch the pros on- and off-road, or experience the beautiful undiscovered lanes of Ceredigion on the Welsh Wild West Sportive, which has four routes ranging from the easy to the rock-hard. abercyclefest.com

25 May–4 June
Hay Festival, Hay-on-Wye
President Bill Clinton got it right when he described Hay as ‘*the Woodstock of the mind*’. It’s an incredible gathering of the world’s greatest writers and thinkers, with 900+ events over the 10 days, featuring politicians and poets, scientists and comedians, novelists and musicians, economists and ecologists, all coming together to kick around big ideas that will change the way you think forever. The format couldn’t be simpler: you turn up in a big tent and listen, and then ask them questions.

There’s also great food and drink, lovely scenery – and plenty of books, of course. This year celebrates the festival’s 30th birthday, so it promises to be better than ever. hayfestival.com

28 May
Welsh Open Stoneskimming Championships
The ancient art of bouncing stones as far as possible across water. The official world record is 88 skips. Beat that. green-events.co.uk

28–29 May
Cowbridge Food & Drink Festival
Over 100 food and drink exhibitors, food demonstrations and music, all in the Vale of Glamorgan’s boutique market town. cowbridgefoodanddrink.org

29 May–3 June
Urdd Eisteddfod, near Bridgend
The youth movement Urdd Gobaith Cymru was founded in 1922 to help children learn and socialise in the Welsh language. Its annual Eisteddfod, one of Europe’s largest youth touring festivals, attracts 100,000 visitors to watch 15,000 kids compete in song, dance and drama.
[urdd.cymru](#)

May (date tbc)
Abergavenny Steam Rally
Shiny engines, buffed to gleaming perfection. The relentless thrust of pistons, the ecstatic hiss of steam. Dungarees and flat cap, worn with no hint of irony. An oily rag, tucked insouciantly into a rear pocket. Marvellous.
[abergavennysteamrally.co.uk](#)

May (date tbc)
Red Bull Hardline, Dinas Mawddwy
This is the toughest downhill mountain bike race in the world, as top riders tackle a hellish four-minute descent in the heavenly surroundings of the Snowdonia National Park.
[redbull.com](#)

JUNE

1 June
UEFA Women’s Champions League Final, Cardiff
The zenith of women’s European football, played in Wales for the first time, at Cardiff City Stadium. The top Welsh team, Cardiff Metropolitan Ladies AFC, didn’t make it through the Group stages but, at the time of writing, Manchester City and title holders Lyon are still in the hunt for glory.
[uefa.com](#)

3 June
UEFA Champions League Final, Cardiff
In terms of global viewers, this is the biggest sporting event ever to be staged in Wales, as the best teams in Europe compete for club football’s most glittering prize. The match itself is the centrepiece of a festival of football, offering Cardiff a chance to show the world’s sports fans just what a first-rate destination our capital city is, and what a brilliant national stadium we have.
[uefa.com](#)

5–25 June
International cricket, Cardiff
The SWALEC Stadium has become a favourite destination for cricket fans. This year we’re co-hosting the One Day International (ODI) tournament, in which the world’s top eight ODI teams slog it out for the ICC Champions Trophy. On 5 June there’s England v New Zealand, New Zealand v Bangladesh on 9 June, Sri Lanka v Pakistan on 12 June, and the first semi-final on 14 June. Then on 25 June it’s the NatWest IT20 match between England and South Africa.
[icc-cricket.com](#)
[tickets.glamorgancricket.com](#)

8–11 June
Gottwood, Anglesey
This independent and very intimate underground electronic music and arts festival describes itself as ‘a mystical little party hidden in the middle of the woods’.
[gottwood.co.uk](#)

9–11 June
All Wales Boat Show, Conwy
Three days of water-based fun at Conwy Quay Marina. You can watch the demonstrations, or buy that luxury motor cruiser you so richly deserve.
[allwalesboatshow.com](#)

10–11 June
Man v Horse, Llanwrtyd Wells
It began as a pub debate: which is faster over mountain terrain – man or horse? In the 36 years they’ve been racing, man has beaten horse just twice. The horses are quite pleased, having put up with years of ‘why the long face?’ jokes.
[green-events.co.uk](#)

11 June
Snowdonia Etape Eryri, Caernarfon
This fabulous sportive takes in some of the best cycling roads anywhere in the world. There are five courses, ranging from the six-mile (10km) family route to the frankly insane 226-mile (654km) Xtreme, Europe’s longest one-day sportive.
[etapeeryri.com](#)

Pembrokeshire Fish Week courtesy of Warren Orchard. Hedd Wyn courtesy of Yr Ysgwrn.

11–18 June
BBC Cardiff Singer of the World
This glorious week of classical music is aimed at opera and concert singers at the start of their careers, and it has propelled the likes of Karita Mattila, Dmitri Hvorostovsky, Bryn Terfel, Anja Harteros and Jamie Barton on to global fame.
[bbc.co.uk](#)

16 June–2 July
Gregynog Festival, nr Newtown
It began as a country house party in 1933, and has grown into one of the best classical festivals in Britain. It’s notably strong on early music, and has premiered new pieces by major composers.
[gregynogfestival.org](#)

17 June–3 September
Agatha Christie: Unfinished Portrait, Cardiff
Agatha Christie’s story is a moving tale with unexpected twists, which you might expect from her well-known fiction. Her fascinating story will be told at the National Museum Cardiff, using material from her family archive, including some donated by her Welsh grandson.
[museum.wales/cardiff](#)

25 June–3 July
Pembrokeshire Fish Week
Pembrokeshire’s glorious 186-mile (300km) coastline has fantastic fish, crustaceans and molluscs. This week-long, county-wide celebration features lots of great food, and includes a whole host of fish-related activities such as fishing trips, masterclasses, walks, forages and picnics.
[pembrokeshirefishweek.co.uk](#)



25 June
Cardiff Triathlon
The barrage across Cardiff Bay forms the perfect sporting amphitheatre for a tri. There are Olympic, Sprint and Super-Sprint distances for the athletes, and the organisers dish out free cowbells to spectators to add a bit of auditory support.
[cardiff-tri.com](#)

28 June–2 July
Hijinx Unity Festival, Cardiff
A big annual showcase of inclusive and disability arts – theatre, dance, music, family shows, comedy. Moreover, it’s simply fantastic entertainment, held at venues like the Wales Millennium Centre and the terrific pub-theatre, Porter’s.
[hijinx.org.uk/unity](#)

JULY

3–9 July
Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod
Every summer since 1947 Llangollen has staged one of the world’s most inspirational cultural festivals. Around 4,000 performers and 50,000 visitors converge on the town to sing and dance in a unique combination of competition, performance, and international peace and friendship.
[international-eisteddfod.co.uk](#)

6–9 July
North Wales Bluegrass Festival, Conwy
Pass me my banjo, Mary-Lou. I’m off to Conwy to enjoy top US and European bluegrass bands, concerts and workshops, Appalachian dance displays.
[northwalesbluegrass.co.uk](#)

9 July
Velothon Wales, Cardiff
This fantastic sportive runs for 140km (87 miles) or 110km (68 miles) if you don’t like big climbs, through spectacular scenery, where you’ll be cheered along closed roads by locals.
[velothon.ironman.com](#)

15–30 July
Festival of Archaeology
Our heritage custodians Cadw are looking after the Welsh side of this major UK-wide event, so look out for lots of special events in their historic sites.
[cadw.gov.wales](#)
[archaeologyfestival.org.uk](#)

22 July
British Speedway Grand Prix, Cardiff
There are 23 heats of action-packed, wheel-to-wheel motorcycle racing with an unrivalled atmosphere at one of the finest stadiums in the UK.
[principalitystadium.wales](#)

24–27 July
Royal Welsh Show, Builth Wells
You don’t have to be Welsh (or royal, or even a farmer) to enjoy Europe’s biggest agricultural show. It’s a fantastic assembly of livestock and machinery, with craft stalls and food halls, competitions and displays. And if you want to see what 15,000 young farmers look like after three days’ solid partying, head immediately to the YFC Young People’s Village, where rural Wales’ liveliest party is in full swing.
[rwas.wales](#)

26–30 July
The Senior Open Championship, Royal Porthcawl
The legends of golf compete for this coveted trophy at one of our most magnificent courses, with sea views from every hole.
[europeantour.com/seniortour](#)
[royalporthcawl.com](#)

29–30 July
Steelhouse Festival, Ebbw Vale
No festival rocks harder than this bargain-value bash, which assembles legendary metal warriors in this old steel-making town. Yes, Saxon are still going. Yes, they’ll be headlining. And yes, they still wear those trousers.
[steelhousefestival.com](#)

July–August (school holidays)
Cardiff Bay Beach, Cardiff
Every summer, Roald Dahl Plass (the big public space in front of the Wales Millennium Centre) is turned into a bustling beach, complete with funfair and traditional seaside attractions.
[cardiffbaybeach.co.uk](#)

July (date tbc)
Llandeilo Jazz Festival
A weekend festival of jazz, blues and soul, usually held in early July, served with lashings of local Evan Evans ale.
[jazzatllandeilo.co.uk](#)

July (date tbc)
Tafwyl, Cardiff
A festival where Welsh speakers go to enjoy gigs, comedy, films, sports, literature, plays and kids’ events. It’s vacating its usual Cardiff Castle location, so see the website for updates.
[tafwyl.org](#)

AUGUST

1–2 August
Wales National Airshow, Swansea
The Red Arrows are just one of the highlights of this free annual airshow, which offers everyone perfect views from the beach at Swansea Bay.
[walesnationalairshow.com](#)

4–12 August
National Eisteddfod of Wales, Bodedern, Anglesey
Wales’ biggest arts festival is also its oldest, tracing its roots back to the year 1176. It’s an eclectic mix of old and new, and a celebration of Wales’ culture and language. The main pavilion hosts competitions in music, poetry and drama, while the Maes is where you’ll find hundreds of trade stands and stalls.
This year marks the centenary of the famous 1917 Eisteddfod of the Black Chair. When the Chair for best poet was announced in the crowded pavilion, nobody came forward; the winner Ellis Evans (known by his bardic name of Hedd Wyn) had been killed on the battlefield in France. The Chair was draped in a black sheet, and became a symbol of the young men who fought and died in the First World War. This year, Hedd Wyn is being remembered in special events across Wales.
[eisteddfod.org.uk](#)



7–9 August
Long Course Weekend, Tenby
This three-day event is one of the toughest triathlons around. Friday is Swim Day, followed by Cycle Day and then Run Day. You can mix ‘n’ match events (and tackle shorter courses), but for the 700 elite athletes who do the full monty, it’s going to be a long, hard weekend.
[longcourseweekend.com](#)

11–13 August
Brecon Jazz
To give you an idea of the calibre of acts at this top jazz festival, Dr John, Burt Bacharach and Gregory Porter have starred in recent years. It’s under new management in 2017, so check the website for updates.
[jazzfestival2017.com](#)

17–20 August
Green Man Festival, Crickhowell
For a lot of us, Green Man is an unmissable fixture in the summer calendar. We take the kids, meet up with old friends, make new ones, amble around with a beer in hand, and discover our new favourite band.
This year marks Green Man’s 15th birthday, and as always there’s an incredibly diverse line-up of acts, ranging from acoustic folk to zillion-BMP electronica, as well as comedy, poetry, wildlife walks, science and literature.
With 1,500 performers in 10 areas, this could just be the perfect festival for everyone. Oh, and the food and drink are terrific, too.
[greenman.net](#)



Image courtesy of Green Man Festival.

19 August
Race the Train, Tywyn
A 14-mile (22km) dash through fields, woodlands and quiet byways, with the added challenge of beating the Talylyn steam train as it chuffs alongside you. The train usually takes around 1hr 48min, to give you an idea of pace.
[racethetrain.com](#)

25–28 August
Extreme Sailing, Cardiff Bay
The world’s top sailing teams battle it out in the perfect amphitheatre of Cardiff Bay. It’s the perfect place to watch these mighty catamarans go through their considerable paces.
[extremesailingseries.com](#)

27 August
World Bog Snorkelling Championship, Llanwrtyd Wells
We like the way they think in Llanwrtyd Wells. How do you drum up trade to a small rural village? Easy. Dig a 197 foot (60m) trench in a peat bog, and invite competitors from around the world to come and swim in it.
[green-events.co.uk](#)

28–30 August
The Big Cheese®, Caerphilly
Set around one of Europe’s largest castles, The Big Cheese® is an extravaganza of street entertainers, living history, music, dance, funfair, folk dancing, falconry and fire eating. We like the registered trademark thing, by the way, Caerphilly. Very professional.
[visitcaerphilly.com](#)

August (date tbc)
RawFfest, Newport
Live music, theatre shows, art, film-making... all of it by and for young people aged 14 to 25.
[rawffest.wales](#)

August (date tbc)
Pride Cymru, Cardiff
The biggest and best LGBT bash in the Welsh calendar has to find a temporary new home this year (because of the aftermath of the UEFA Champions League Final). When details are known, it’ll be on their website. One thing’s for certain: it’s bound to be a great party.
[pridecymru.co.uk](#)

SEPTEMBER
1–30 September
Cadw Open Doors
For one month a year, Wales’ historic places allow you to delve a little deeper, open hidden doors, see what’s behind the scenes (and sometimes get in free).
[cadw.gov.wales/opendoors](#)

2 September
Wales v Austria, Cardiff
After the sheer joy of Euro 2016, the quest to reach a football World Cup gets serious: we drew 2–2 in the away leg of this Group D qualifier in Vienna.
[faw.cymru](#)

3–10 September
Tour of Britain
Britain’s premier cycling race comes to Wales every year, usually for its toughest stages. The route isn’t confirmed yet, but hill climbs will certainly feature.
[tourofbritain.co.uk](#)

7–10 September
Festival No.6, Portmeirion
There’s no better festival setting in the world than Portmeirion. The beautiful Italianate village is a surreal enough place at any time, but when you add the likes of Grace Jones, Bastille, the Pet Shop Boys and Hot Chip into the mix... it’s just a magical event, in a magical place.
[festivalnumber6.com](#)



Portmeirion was the setting for the cult 1960s TV series, *The Prisoner*.

10 September
Ironman Wales, Tenby
This is one of the toughest events in the Ironman calendar. The sea may be flat (well, usually) but the hilly bike ride and run are a major challenge.
[eu.ironman.com](#)

15–17 September
The Good Life Experience, Hawarden
The singer, presenter and polymath Cerys Matthews is one of the brains behind this festival, which puts mindless materialism to one side, and embraces the simple pleasures of the things that really matter: family, friends, the great outdoors, books, proper food and drink, laughter, poetry, campfires, and music that comes from the soul. All the things that don’t cost a great deal but that make life richer, more rewarding and better fun.
[thegoodlifeexperience.co.uk](#)

22–24 September
Porthcawl Elvis Festival
Thousands of Elvis fans descend on the seaside town for a unique celebration of The King. The big events happen in the Grand Pavilion, with lots of other free shows in The Hi Tide, and another 20 venues form the Fringe Festival.
[elvies.co.uk](#)

September (date tbc)
Abergavenny Food Festival
Created by two local farmers in 1999, this major food event now attracts 30,000 visitors to enjoy the best in Welsh, British and international food and drink.
[abergavennyfoodfestival.com](#)

September (date tbc)
Beaumaris Food Festival
Against the backdrop of the 12th-century Beaumaris Castle, the ‘Town Green’ is dotted with marquees and gazebos, offering the best of Welsh produce and international street food.
[beaumarisfoodfestival.co.uk](#)

OCTOBER
1 October
Cardiff Half Marathon
This is Wales’ largest road race and multi-charity fundraising event, with around 22,000 runners. The record time of 61:51, set by Kenya’s Loitarakwai Lengurisi, is your target.
[cardiffhalfmarathon.co.uk](#)

9 October
Wales v Ireland, Cardiff
The last Group D football qualifier, with the glittering prize of a place in the 2018 FIFA World Cup. No pressure, then.
[faw.cymru](#)

10–15 October
Iris Prize Festival, Cardiff
This six-day celebration of LGBT film includes screenings of the 35 short films competing for the Iris Prize and the 15 short films competing for the Best British Iris Prize.
[irisprize.org](#)

20–22 October
Sŵn Festival, Cardiff
This guerrilla music festival takes over just about every available venue in Cardiff, to showcase raw musical talent in intimate spaces. It’s loosely based on SXSW in Texas, and designed to unearth the next generation of performers.
[swnfest.com](#)

26–29 October
Wales Rally GB
The British leg of the FIA World Rally Championship takes place over three thrilling days in some of Wales’ most stunning scenery.
[walesrallygb.com](#)

27 October–9 November
Dylan Thomas Festival, Swansea
A two-week literature festival that starts on Dylan’s birthday and finishes on the date of his death.
[dylanthomas.com](#)

NOVEMBER
November–January
Cardiff Winter Wonderland
Ice-skating and rides, mulled wine and roasted chestnuts, and all kinds of feel-good festivities in Cardiff’s civic centre.
[cardiffwinterwonderland.com](#)

November–January
Christmas in Cardiff
Lots of events fall under the Christmas in Cardiff banner, from panto to ballet. Santa advises checking the website for details.
[cardiff-events.com](#)

November–January
Waterfront Winterland, Swansea
Museum Park is transformed, complete with ice rink and funfair, into Waterfront Winterland. Try saying it really quickly after a few mulled wines.
[waterfrontwinterland.com](#)

DECEMBER
Santa Steam Specials
There are 11 steam railways in the Great Little Trains fleet, and most run Santa Specials during the Christmas season.
[greatlittletrainsofwales.co.uk](#)

Christmas markets
There are excellent Christmas markets in many Welsh towns, including big ‘uns at Blackwood, Wrexham and Caerphilly. Dates aren’t confirmed yet, so check the websites:
[visitcaerphilly.com](#)
[wrexham.com](#)

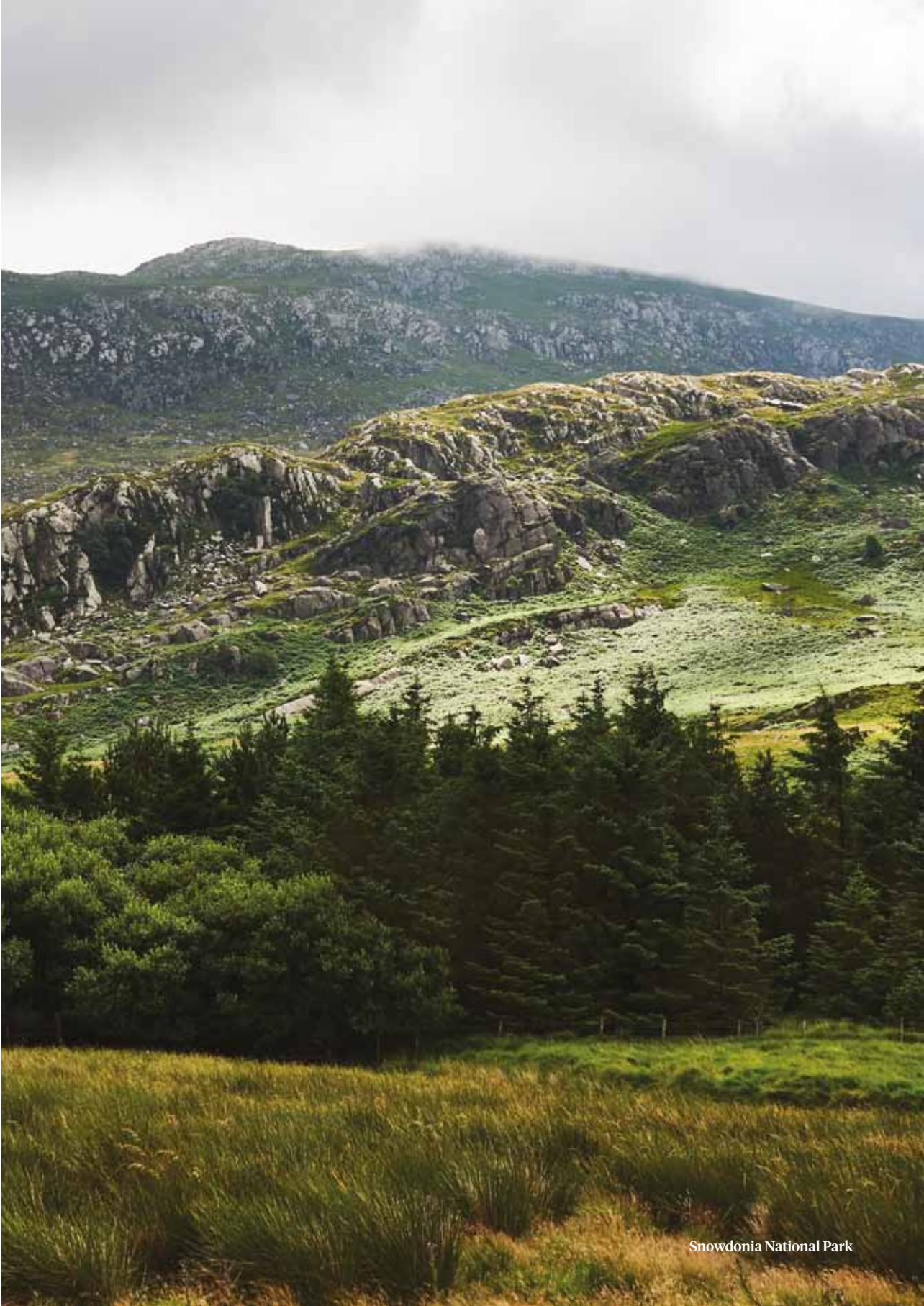
Seasonal swims
It’s time to work off the estimated six billion calories you’ve consumed over the festive period, by going for an admittedly chilly dip in the sea. There’s a Christmas Day swim at Porthcawl, and Boxing Day dips at Pembrey Country Park, Tenby and Llandudno.

31 December
Nos Galan Road Races, Mountain Ash
The annual race commemorates the 18th-century Welsh runner Guto Nyth Brân, who was so quick, he could blow out his bedroom candle and be under the covers before it was dark.
[nosgalan.co.uk](#)

We've bombarded you with great stuff and now you're thinking 'Where do I start?' To help you, here's a snapshot of great spots to explore in Wales. With many more, make these 20 the starting point of your great Welsh adventure.

Make sure you visit our website for even more information and inspiration on where to Eat, Drink, Stay and Play in Wales. *visitwales.com*

Travel Handbook.



Snowdonia National Park

Gateway to the Snowdonia National Park, *Betws-y-Coed* is fast becoming the adventure activity centre of the UK. There’s lots to see and do in the surrounding area – sturdy footwear, a camera and a healthy appetite will come in handy.



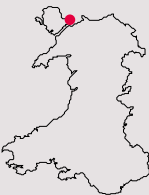
There are many more places to explore in Wales, make sure you go online for information and inspiration: visitwales.com | visitsnowdonia.info

Eat / Drink	Stay	Play
Olif Generally, people don’t visit Wales for the Spanish cuisine, but Olif is not your average tapas bar. This is tapas with Welsh ingredients. The only food that hasn’t been sourced locally are the olives. olif-betws.co.uk	Aberconwy House A 5-star Victorian bed and breakfast in a quiet location close to the centre of Betws-y-Coed, with fantastic views of the Llugwy and Conwy Valleys. aberconwy-house.co.uk	Zip World Fforest Take a zip line journey 60 feet (18m) up through the forest canopy or a 100-foot (30m) freefall from Plummet Tower. For that additional adrenalin fix you can climb aboard Skyride, Europe’s highest giant swing. zipworld.co.uk
Hangin’ Pizzeria Apart from the fact their pizzas are well worth breaking any diet for, they donate a percentage of their profits to charities helping orangutans and great apes. hanginpizzeria.co.uk	Penmachno Hall If Betws-y-Coed is ‘Adventure Central’, the village of Penmachno, 4 miles (6km) away, is definitely the ‘Chill-out Zone’. This former rectory was awarded a Visit Wales Gold Award in 2016, which makes it the best of the best. penmachnohall.co.uk	Go Below Abseil, zip line, scramble, traverse, boat and climb your way around the abandoned mines of Snowdonia with Go Below, encountering lakes, caverns and forgotten mining machinery as you go. go-below.co.uk
Pete’s Eats, Llanberis Server of (reputedly) the best chip butties around, along with pint mugs of tea, this café is a mecca for climbers and outdoor enthusiasts to meet and share information about the area. petes-eats.co.uk	Tan y Foel Country House Maria and Chris, owners of this 16th-century country guesthouse, take pride in combining luxurious boutique-style accommodation with exceptional levels of service. Great breakfast comes as standard. tyfhotel.co.uk	Walking in Snowdonia Gwydyr Forest Park covers a 28 square mile (73 square km) area surrounding Betws-y-Coed. Waymarked walking trails allow visitors to explore the lakes, forests and mountains and learn more about the area’s lead and zinc mining history. eryri-npa.gov.uk



The Marram Grass Café, Newborough

It's worth visiting *Beaumaris* just for its mighty castle, but it's also a great base from which to explore Anglesey, the largest island in Wales. The 125 mile (200km) Anglesey Coast Path offers historical, natural and culinary adventures.



There are many more places to explore in Wales, make sure you go online for information and inspiration: visitwales.com | visitanglesey.co.uk

Eat / Drink	Stay	Play
Sosban & The Old Butchers, Menai Bridge One of Wales’ seven Michelin-starred restaurants, the food at the Sosban & The Old Butchers is so good they don’t need a menu, choosing to serve the best local produce available that day. sosbanandtheoldbutchers.com	The Windmill If you stay in a windmill, spectacular views are a given. You can see Beaumaris, the Menai Strait and the Snowdonia mountains from one side, and the Irish Sea, Puffin Island, the Great Orme and the Isle of Man from the other. whitebeachholiday.co.uk	South Stack, Holyhead A spectacular cliff and heathland seascape. Enjoy a close-up view onto a wonderful cliff-side nesting colony. Watch guillemots, razorbills and puffins all raising their young, while live webcam pictures give you an even closer view of the nests. rspb.org.uk
The Marram Grass Café, Newborough It once was a chicken shed, but now this utterly charming restaurant, which featured in the Waitrose <i>Good Food Guide 2016</i>, uses the best of Anglesey and Welsh produce, practising nose-to-tail butchery ensuring minimal waste. themarramgrass.com	Château Rhianfa, Menai Bridge The scenery of the Loire Valley in France inspired Sir John Hay Williams, Baronet of Bodelwyddan, to build the Château in 1849, as a gift for his wife Lady Sarah. Perched on the edge of the Menai Strait, it has 30 luxury rooms and provides a gourmet dining experience. chateaurhianfa.co.uk	RibRide Adventure Boat Tours, Menai Bridge Ride a RIB on the Menai Strait or go on a Bear Grylls boat tour to the islands and high cliffs of the north Anglesey coast. The boat skippers are your guides to the natural history of Anglesey. ribride.co.uk
Sea Shanty Café, Trearddur Bay A great café, restaurant and ice-cream parlour just behind the dunes of Trearddur Bay beach. It’s worth going in just to look at the memorabilia, jars upon jars of beach finds and beautiful boats. seashantycafe.co.uk	Wonderfully Wild Glamping comes to Anglesey. Each of the four lodges offers all of the comfort and style expected of a luxury camping holiday, while allowing you, your friends and family to get closer to nature and explore the countryside. wonderfullywild.co.uk	Anglesey Riding Centre, Dwyran With five miles (8km) of private bridleways set within Anglesey’s Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and running alongside the beautiful Menai Strait, you’d be hard-pressed to find horse riding in more beautiful surroundings. angleseyridingcentre.co.uk

Conwy.



Bryn Williams at Porth Eirias, Colwyn Bay

The mighty castle and town walls of *Conwy* are perhaps the finest examples of medieval military architecture in Europe. Despite (or perhaps because of) its fortifications, Conwy is a warm and welcoming place to eat, drink and explore the North Wales coast and Vale of Conwy.



There are many more places to explore in Wales, make sure you go online for information and inspiration: visitwales.com | visitllandudno.org.uk

Eat / Drink

Bryn Williams at Porth Eiras, Colwyn Bay
Open for breakfast, lunch, afternoon tea and dinner, and just a stone's throw from the sea and beach of Porth Eirias. A big, open space with an easy, informal mood. portheirias.com

Signatures
Aberconwy Resort and Spa on the Conwy coast boasts Jimmy and Louise Williams' Signatures restaurant. It specialises in modern British cuisine and has been listed in the *Michelin Guide* for the last five years. darwinescapes.co.uk

The Albion Pub
Regarded as one of the finest examples of a 1920s public house in Britain, The Albion is a collaboration between four local breweries and has a wonderful buzz to it, drawing a diverse and friendly mix of locals and visitors. albionalehouse.weebly.com

Stay

Castle Hotel
A Grade I-listed building on the site of a 12th-century Cistercian abbey on Conwy's main high street. Book early – it's popular. castlewales.co.uk

Groes Inn
This independent hotel and restaurant has rustic soul covered. It's blessed with stunning views of the Conwy Estuary, award-winning dining, a good bar and 14 handsome bedrooms. groesinn.com

Escape B&B, Llandudno
Forget everything you know about dodgy seaside bed and breakfasts. With room names like Urban Cool, Calm & Light and Retro Red, it's pretty obvious that this B&B by the sea is more than fit for 21st-century purposes. escapebandb.co.uk

Play

Aberconwy House
A high street hidden gem. This medieval merchant's house is the only one in Conwy to survive six centuries of turbulent history. nationaltrust.org.uk/aberconwy-house

Royal Cambrian Academy
North Wales was home to the first artists' colony in the UK and the RCA was established as a result. Its list of members reads like a *Who's Who* of art in Wales and its exhibitions feature both historical and contemporary work. rcaconwy.org

Conwy Golf Club
Conwy is a classic links course, and the first in Wales to have the honour of hosting a qualifying event for The Open Championship. In 2020 it hosts the Curtis Cup, the biggest team trophy for women amateur golfers. conwygolfclub.com



Antur Stiniog

Blaenau Ffestiniog offers visitors a range of activities from walking to fishing, climbing to caving, and kayaking to mountain biking. It has an illustrious past, too: its historic slate mines made it ‘the town that roofed the world’.



There are many more places to explore in Wales, make sure you go online for information and inspiration: visitwales.com | visitsnowdonia.info

Eat / Drink

CellB

You’d be hard-pressed to find a more quirky café bar than CellB. It’s located in the old police station and court house, just off the main street. It’s also home to Blaenau Ffestiniog’s first cinema in 40 years.
cellb.org

Hebog, Beddgelert

Upmarket café by day, sleek bistro by night. Emlyn and Nici will make you the most welcome of guests. The Welsh Rarebit comes very highly recommended.
hebog-beddgelert.co.uk

Y Manod

A traditional miners’ tavern on the outskirts of town. Stripped wooden beams and slate feature fireplaces all add to the cosy atmosphere and a warm welcome is always guaranteed.
[Facebook: Y Manod Hotel](https://www.facebook.com/YManodHotel)

Stay

Cae’r Blaidd

If you’re in need of relaxation, this chilled country house, set in peaceful woodland and gardens with panoramic views over the Vale of Ffestiniog and the Moelwyn Mountain range, could be just the prescription.
caerblaidd.com

Bryn Eltyd

It’s surprising what you can find 700 feet (213m) up a Welsh mountain. Like an award-winning eco guesthouse, that’s 100% carbon neutral, with all energy coming from renewables – including energy for the sauna, biomass heating system, wi-fi and electric car charge points!
ecoguesthouse.co.uk

Tyddyn Du Farm, Gellilydan

Ideal family accommodation on a working farm, inviting visitors to wander among the animals in the pet fields, get involved with animal feeding and help to collect eggs for breakfast.
snowdonia-farm-holidays-wales.co.uk

There are so many places in Wales that have inspired and influenced me. It feels as though I would be betraying a lover or a best friend if I were to choose one over another. However, Blaenau Ffestiniog and the surrounding area has had a huge influence on me and my healthy outlook on life. It has all the ingredients of the perfect ‘Bara Brith’ – an unnatural beauty, mixed with a compelling history, diverse cultures colliding and an underground vibrancy that is completely unlike anywhere else on the planet.

As John Davies, the late Welsh historian, once said to me: ‘Blaenau Ffestiniog. Bonkers but never boring.’



Ceri Cunningham
Co-founder of Antur Stiniog and lead singer of Brython Shag

Play

Antur Stiniog

The former Llechwedd slate quarry in Blaenau Ffestiniog is a dramatic backdrop to the town. Generations of people have worked hard and played hard here; the singletrack mountain bike trails at Antur Stiniog are the embodiment of that way of life.
anturstiniog.com

Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railways

People go to the ends of the earth to experience a great railway journey. There are two awaiting you in the Heart of Snowdonia. The Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railways stretch over 40 miles (64km) of magnificent landscape and steam engine romance.
festrail.co.uk

Portmeirion

The dream-like village on a gorgeous estuary, with views across to the mountains of Snowdonia. Unsurprisingly, it’s one of Wales’ best-loved places to visit, chosen by Trip Advisor as the most colourful place in the UK.
portmeirion-village.com



Abersoch beach

A popular spot for sailing and watersports, *Abersoch* attracts an eclectic mix of visitors drawn by the promise of coastal adventure. Fine beaches run along the picturesque Tremadog Bay on the Llŷn Peninsula, a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.



There are many more places to explore in Wales, make sure you go online for information and inspiration: visitwales.com | visitsnowdonia.info

Eat / Drink

The Coconut Kitchen

Having started cooking Thai cuisine from a trailer pitched in a field, Preechaya and Paul's business expanded to permanent premises in 2007, and in 2015 it was named Best Oriental Restaurant in Wales. Buy a bottle of one of their own sauces to recreate the great flavours back at home. thecoconutkitchen.co.uk

Plas Bodegroes, Pwllheli

In the 30 years since Plas Bodegroes first opened, the food, wine and service in the restaurant have gained the highest accolades from many of the leading guides, including *Good Food Guide UK* Restaurant of the Year. bodegroes.co.uk

Cadwaladers

Cadwaladers' vanilla ice cream was originally made in the window of their Criccieth café. Nowadays they make too much ice cream to make it in the shop window but it's still made in Wales, to a closely-guarded secret recipe. cadwaladers.co.uk

Stay

Venetia

Venetia is a balance of old and new, a beautiful Victorian villa restored into a haven of contemporary luxury. The emphasis is on pasta and seafood, with the restaurant menu influenced by owner Marco's Italian roots and passion for fishing. venetiawales.com

Graeanfryn Farm Holiday Park, Morfa Nefyn

Just outside Morfa Nefyn, the beautiful Graeanfryn Farm house has four spacious guest rooms. Breakfasts involve goose and duck eggs from owner Jan Harrison's smallholding. For the more independently-spirited, there are 40 camping pitches available. campingnorthwales.co.uk

Gwesty Tŷ Newydd, Aberdaron

Situated in the picturesque and historic village of Aberdaron, the hotel directly overlooks the bay and sandy beach, one of the finest and safest beaches on the Llŷn Peninsula. gwesty-tynewydd.co.uk

Play

Abersoch Sailing School

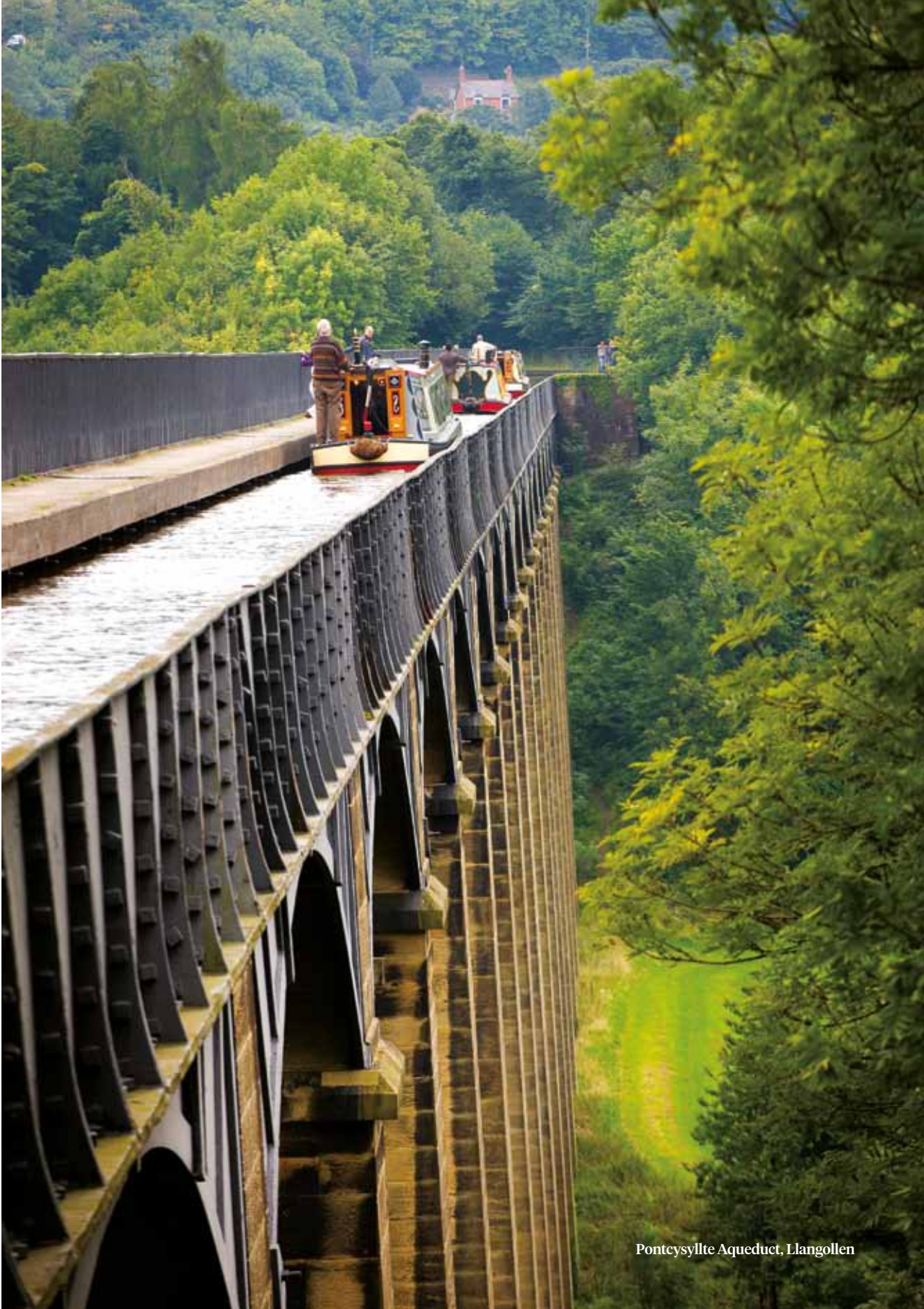
This family-run business, based on Abersoch main beach, offers a whole range of activities including sailing, powerboating, paddle boarding, kayaking, pedalos, ringo rides and yachting experiences. abersochsailingschool.co.uk

Nant Gwrtheyrn

An abandoned quarrying village in a stunning coastal spot on the Llŷn Peninsula, the Nant has been transformed into a Welsh Language and Heritage Centre, with 24 beautifully-renovated workers' cottages. nantgwrtheyrn.org

Plas Glyn y Weddw, Llanbedrog

This very unique art gallery is situated in Llanbedrog. The impressive Grade II Gothic Victorian mansion is the perfect place to view some of Wales' best contemporary art. oriel.org.uk



Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, Llangollen

There are more listed buildings (255) in *Denbigh* than any other town in Wales, and it’s a lot more peaceful since the English and Welsh stopped fighting bitterly for control of it. It has been a flourishing market town since Elizabethan times, and is a great base-camp for the Clwydian Range.



There are many more places to explore in Wales, make sure you go online for information and inspiration: visitwales.com | northeastwales.co.uk

Eat / Drink

The Glass Onion Café

This buzzing little eatery is just off the High Street, popular with locals and visitors alike. The café’s name comes from a Beatles track on the White Album. glassonioncafe.co.uk

Tyddyn Llan, Llandrillo

This gorgeous country house restaurant-with-rooms has the best of Welsh produce, but doesn’t hesitate to scour the wider world for the very finest seasonal ingredients. One of Wales’ seven Michelin-starred restaurants. tyddynllan.co.uk

The Hand at Llanarmon

Head Chef Grant Mullholland has been awarded an AA Rosette for culinary excellence and an AA Eggcup for outstanding breakfasts. Portions are generous, produce is local and the cooking is fresh and flavoursome. thehandhotel.co.uk

Stay

Manorhaus Ruthin

This Grade II-listed Georgian townhouse is a 5-star restaurant with rooms in the centre of town. The restaurant has been listed in the *Michelin Guide* every year since 2010. manorhausruthin.com

Clwydian Wigwams, Ruthin

Situated on a working beef and sheep farm with the Clwydian Range as a backdrop, these cosy wigwams give you the ‘glamping’ experience – camping with many of the comforts of home. wigwamholidays.com

Castle House Bed and Breakfast

This 5-star bed and breakfast offers guests informal luxury and wonderful views of the Clwydian Range. Constructed as a gentleman’s residence in 1720, it was once visited by former Prime Minister David Lloyd George. castlehousebandb.co.uk

When I grew up, all I could see from my bedroom window was the outline of the Clwydian Range, a chain of 20 hills running from Llandegla to Prestatyn. It gave me a huge appetite for exploring the area, which has been with me throughout my life.

I tell friends who visit to bring their walking boots and their bikes. If it’s sunny we’ll go on an adventure. If it’s raining hard, we’ll go to the pub. Whatever you do there’s a distinct Clwydian flavour to it all. It’s a bit like hearing a piece of music you recognise but can’t remember its name. It’s comforting and familiar, but you can’t quite put your finger on why.



Iwan Edwards
Community officer for the North Wales Wildlife Trust

Play

Llyn Brenig, Cerrigydrudion

The windy conditions make the lake perfect for sailing and it’s the UK’s highest freshwater sailing venue. It’s also one of the best top-of-the-water fisheries in the UK, having hosted a number of major fly fishing championships. llyn-brenig.co.uk

Moel Famau Country Park

At 1,818 feet (554m), Moel Famau – which means ‘Mother Mountain’ in Welsh – is the highest summit in the Clwydian Range. Topped by the Jubilee Tower, this iconic local landmark is visible for many miles around. clwydianrangeanddeevalleyaonb.org.uk

Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, Llangollen

Dare you cross the highest aqueduct in Britain at 126 feet (38m)? You can walk across this UNESCO World Heritage Site, or save your legs and take a leisurely boat. But don’t forget your camera – the views are something else. pontcysyllte-aqueduct.co.uk



©Fiona Black.

Ynyshir Hall

The weekly Wednesday market in *Machynlleth* dates back to a Royal Charter issued in 1291. In ‘Mach’ (as it’s referred to), you’ll meet people who are passionate about art, nature, wholesome food and sustainable living.



There are many more places to explore in Wales, make sure you go online for information and inspiration: visitwales.com | midwalesmyway.com

Eat / Drink

Wynnstay

Good food at the Wynnstay starts with ingredients. Welsh, where possible, and ideally all from within 50 miles (80km) of the kitchen door. Chef Gareth Johns follows the Slow Food manifesto of ‘Good, Clean and Fair’. wynnstay.wales

Number Twenty One

Located in the heart of the town and run by a passionate young foodie couple, the food is imaginative, the service is friendly, children are welcome and nothing seems like too much trouble. numbertwentyone.co.uk

Gwesty Glan yr Afon / Riverside Hotel Pennal

A family-run country pub in the southern fringes of the Snowdonia National Park, where everyone is welcome whether it be for a quick lunchtime pint, or a family gathering for dinner in the restaurant. riversidehotel-pennal.co.uk

Stay

The Old Rectory on the Lake, Tal-y-llyn
You might never get used to the breath-taking view from the Old Rectory. Sitting on the slopes of Cader Idris, guests open the blinds to see the glacial lake of Tal-y-llyn and imposing crags stretching out before them. rectoryonthelake.co.uk

Ynyshir Hall, Eglwys Fach
You might expect this luxurious country hotel to serve traditional haute cuisine; in fact, the taster menus are delightfully playful, mixing local and international flavours with panache and humour. One of Wales’ seven Michelin-starred restaurants. ynyshirhall.co.uk

Glandyfi Castle
A Grade II-listed Regency Gothic revival castle set high above the Dyfi Estuary with dramatic views of the estuary and sea beyond. Despite the grand setting, there are no pretensions of grandeur, just a warm welcome. glandyficastle.co.uk

Riding in the Dyfi area makes me feel like I am completely connected with the land. One minute you’re smashing down a gnarly, eye-watering downhill, rocks flying off your tyres and your heart pounding, literally bubbling with the excitement. The next you’re hurtling onto a path bathed in sunlight, with foxgloves fighting for space, bees lazily floating around, a stream trickling below mossy banks, the smell of pine and red kites circling high above. The contrast is startling.

I can’t help but be grateful for the opportunity to experience our home country as it always has been – and having a bloody good time doing it! This is why I love mountain biking in Wales.

Rachel Atherton
Word champion mountain biker



Play

Centre for Alternative Technology
A pioneering eco-centre with interactive displays showcasing the power of wind, water and the sun. It also demonstrates working examples of sustainable living and encourages people to make green living a part of their everyday lives. cat.org.uk

King Arthur’s Labyrinth, Corris
An underground storytelling adventure where a magical waterfall is a gateway to the Dark Ages and a time of myth, legend and King Arthur himself. kingarthurslabyrinth.co.uk

Cader Idris
For grandeur and rugged beauty, few locations can equal the National Nature Reserve at Cader Idris. Local folklore describes Idris as a giant who lived on this magnificent mountain; its Welsh name means ‘Chair of Idris’. naturalresources.wales



©Warren Orchard.

Aberystwyth seafront

Aberystwyth has a vibrant student population of over 10,000, which gives the place a unique buzz. It's the ideal base for further exploration of the Cambrian Mountains, the surrounding countryside and the vast sweep of Cardigan Bay.



There are many more places to explore in Wales, make sure you go online for information and inspiration: visitwales.com | discoverceredigion.wales

Eat / Drink

Baravin

In a splendid position on Aber's seafront, this easy-going contemporary eatery turns out pizza, pasta and other locally-sourced delights. Great atmosphere. baravin.co.uk

Y Ffarmers

Y Ffarmers is a country pub that's a regular fixture in the *Good Food Guide* in the pretty village of Llanfihangel y Creuddyn, near Aberystwyth. Chef Rhodri Edwards and his team focus on making the most of the excellent local produce. yffarmers.co.uk

Treehouse

A characterful organic food shop and restaurant, with a bicycle delivery service, no less. The food is fresh, locally sourced and caters for all dietary requirements. treehousewales.co.uk

Stay

Gwesty Cymru

With eight stylish rooms and an award-winning restaurant, Gwesty Cymru is situated in the centre of Aberystwyth's Victorian promenade, overlooking Cardigan Bay. A contemporary Welsh cultural experience. gwestycymru.com

Nanteos

An ancient wooden drinking vessel, called The Nanteos Cup, is rumoured to be The Holy Grail. It's a major episode in the award-winning Georgian mansion's colourful history that you can explore further, as you relax in luxurious country surroundings. nanteos.com

Tynrhyd Retreat, Pontarfynach

The clue is in the name. A secluded holiday barn within easy reach of the Cambrian Mountains and the coast. Plenty to do if you're feeling active, nothing but birdsong to disturb you if you're not. tynrhyd.com

Play

Vale of Rheidol Railway

Sit back, relax and let the train take the strain as you go on a nostalgic journey through some of Wales' most spectacular scenery, including Devil's Bridge Falls. rheidolrailway.co.uk

Aberystwyth Arts Centre

The award-winning Aberystwyth Arts Centre is one of the UK's largest arts centres. Part of Aberystwyth University, it is recognised as a 'national flagship for the arts', attracting over 700,000 visitors a year. aberystwythartscentre.co.uk

Bwlch Nant yr Arian

The Visitor Centre has commanding views of Cardigan Bay and the Cambrian Mountains. A range of waymarked trails for walkers, mountain bikers, runners and horse riders start here. Coincide your visit with the daily feeding sessions of the majestic red kites, the national bird of Wales. naturalresources.wales



Elan Valley

The Romans were drawn to *Llandrindod Wells* by its natural springs, which also made it a fashionable resort during the 19th century. Llandod (as it's known locally) enjoys a strategic central location that brings vast swathes of Mid Wales within easy reach.



There are many more places to explore in Wales, make sure you go online for information and inspiration: visitwales.com | midwalesmyway.com

Eat / Drink

Sugar & Spice

This welcoming, imaginative bistro keeps you guessing with themed dishes from around the world. A vibrant antidote to predictable menus. sugarandspicebistro.co.uk

Herb Garden Café

Veggies love the café right by Llandrindod Wells station, although the meat dishes are also excellent on a hugely diverse menu. herbgardencafe.co.uk

Old Vicarage, Dolfor

Numerous local suppliers – and the vicarage’s own kitchen garden – help to provide the sumptuous choices offered by these award winners. theoldvicaragedolfor.co.uk

Stay

Carlton Riverside, Llanwrtyd Wells

Set in one of the town’s oldest buildings, this quirky restaurant-with-rooms combines top-notch dining and luxurious comfort. carltonriverside.com

Nannerth Fawr Farm, Rhayader

A cosy former granary is one charming option at this 200-acre (81ha) farm – or try a loft, a Romany caravan or camping. nannerth.co.uk

Lake Country House Hotel, Llangammarch Wells

Complete relaxation is the aim at this majestic country house and spa retreat. Treat yourself to a full-scale pamper. lakecountryhouse.co.uk

Play

Elan Valley

Elan’s 70 square miles (181 square km) of wildlife and adventure have Stone Age origins. Its night skies and after-dark habitats are world-renowned. elanvalley.org.uk

Abbey Cwm Hir

Take a tour of this glorious Victorian home, including thousands of astonishing collectables and views over a 12th-century abbey, where Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, the last sovereign ruler of Wales, is buried. abbeycwmhir.com

Gigrin Farm, Rhayader

Excitement and a lot of noise can only mean one thing: the awe-inspiring daily red kite feeds at this friendly 200-acre (81ha) farm. gigrin.co.uk



Fforest , Cilgerran

At the mouth of the River Teifi, *Cardigan* marks the border between the counties of Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion. Once the most important port in Wales, it offers plenty of natural wonder, and its unspoilt townscape and rich heritage provide a nostalgic backdrop to a thriving culture of arts and crafts, events and music festivals.



There are many more places to explore in Wales, make sure you go online for information and inspiration: visitwales.com | discoverceredigion.wales

Eat / Drink
Pizzatipi From a courtyard overlooking the Teifi river, four brothers (and their friends) serve delicious wood-fired pizzas, craft ales and wine. pizzatipi.co.uk
Vic North, Newport This superb deli and café runs on passion. They also offer masterclasses – your chance to learn the tricks behind the magic. vicnorth.co.uk
St Dogmaels Local Producers Market The bustling weekly village market triumphed in the 2016 BBC Radio 4 Food and Farming Awards. stdogmaelsabbey.org.uk/producers_market

Stay
Cardigan Castle With a colourful 900-year history, Cardigan’s castle is best known as the venue for the first cultural Eisteddfod in 1176. cardigancastle.com
Fforest, Cilgerran A collection of unique accommodation options, including cabins, bell tents and a Georgian farmhouse. Perfect for enjoying life’s simple pleasures. coldatnight.co.uk
Dolly the Circus Waggon Laze in a renovated circus waggon with a parlour, kitchen and bedroom, set next to an 18th-century stone farmhouse. ffynnonf.co.uk

Play
Dolphin Spotting The mere sight of a dorsal fin will set the heart racing. You’re likely to see Atlantic grey seals, too. baytoremember.co.uk
Welsh Wildlife Centre Look out for the giant willow badger, kingfishers and, if you’re lucky, the centre’s resident water buffalo across four trails. welshwildlife.org
Teifi Gorge From wooded estuaries to wild clifftops, paddle along the stunning 12-mile (19km) route from Cardigan to Aberporth on an open canoe. ceredigioncoastpath.org.uk



St Davids Coast

Britain’s smallest city, *St Davids* is a perfectly-formed home to enchanting history, incredible beaches and a vibrant community. This is the westernmost tip of Wales, from which Pembrokeshire’s magical islands and St Bride’s Bay are within easy reach.



There are many more places to explore in Wales, make sure you go online for information and inspiration: visitwales.com | visitpembrokeshire.com

Eat / Drink

Cwtch

This cosy restaurant has earned dozens of awards since opening in 2005. It’s a must-visit – advance booking is always wise. cwtchrestaurant.co.uk

The Refectory at St Davids

Few restaurants have as grandiose a setting as the one neighbouring the cathedral. The menu features Pembrokeshire cheese and meats. stdavidsrefectory.co.uk

Cambrian Inn, Solva

With owners who are immensely passionate about Pembrokeshire, this 16th-century venue has a reputation for wonderful food and beer. thecambrianinn.co.uk

Stay

Twr y Felin Hotel

Wales’ first art hotel hosts 100 original works, luxury accommodation and fine dining within wandering distance of Pembrokeshire’s best beaches. twryfelinhotel.com

Caerfai Farm

Relax and explore from these beautiful holiday cottages with their own gardens. The campsite leads directly onto the Pembrokeshire Coast Path. caerfaifarm.co.uk

Trellyn Woodland Camping, Abercastle

‘Cool camping’ is the calling card of this hugely popular site. Yurts, tipis and a geo-eco glamping dome are available. trellyn.co.uk

I’m passionate about the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, every square inch of it, but there is one special place that I love. It’s a place where I can sit quietly on the quay in the very early morning when there is no-one else around. Later in the day I can watch a leisurely bustle as the little watery valley, formed by glacial meltwater millions of years ago, becomes busy with kayaks, canoes and boats.

I love the coastal flowers that burst into life around the harbour during spring and know that they will have given pleasure to generations before me. There is an old country saying, ‘Kissing’s in season when the gorse is in bloom.’ It seems to flower all year in Porthclais... wildaboutpembrokeshire.co.uk



Julia Horton-Powdrill

Wild food explorer and founder of the Really Wild Festival

Play

St Davids Cathedral

The Pope once compared this cathedral to Rome’s holiest sites. Evensong and a fantastic summer classical music festival are highlights. stdavidscathedral.org.uk stdavidscathedralfestival.co.uk

TYF Adventure

Champions of life-long adventuring, let this team of experts show you the thrills of coasteering, kayaking, surfing and rockpool safari. tyf.com

Voyages of Discovery

Meet dolphins, seals, puffins, porpoises and seabirds on a glorious boat trip around the caves and gorges of Ramsey Island. ramseyisland.co.uk



Tenby seafront

With glorious beaches, a warm atmosphere and fine Victorian houses painted in sugared-almond colours, *Tenby* is one of the prettiest and cosiest Welsh seaside towns, and a gateway to southern Pembrokeshire. The town’s Welsh name, *Dinbych-y-pysgod* (Little Fortress of the Fish), is a nod to the dainty harbour beside Castle Hill.



There are many more places to explore in Wales, make sure you go online for information and inspiration: visitwales.com | visitpembrokeshire.com

Eat / Drink

Blue Ball

Favoured by critics and food fans, Blue Ball specialises in fish and smoked meat. A smart choice for Sunday lunch. theblueballrestaurant.co.uk

Coast Saundersfoot

A multiple award-winning restaurant, including AA Restaurant of the Year in Wales, with superb views of the beach. The food’s good too, with dishes ranging from local venison to chocolate lava. coastsaundersfoot.co.uk

Salt Cellar

The four friends running the relatively new cellar have created a mouth-watering menu inspired by the natural beauty of Wales. Deservedly awarded double AA Rosettes. thesaltcellartenby.co.uk

Stay

St Brides Spa Hotel, Saundersfoot

A clifftop hotel where you can luxuriate in the outdoor infinity pool overlooking Saundersfoot beach – heated to blood temperature whatever the weather. stbridesspahotel.com

Celtic Haven, Lydstep

From cosy cottages for two to a Manor House accommodating 12, these self-catering getaways have their origins in the 12th century. celtichaven.co.uk

Trefloyne Manor

Overlooking the golf course, Trefloyne’s family-run boutique guesthouse offers award-winning stay-and-play accommodation with a real sense of style and luxury. trefloyne.com

Play

Tenby Museum

The fine location on the headland at Castle Hill is perhaps the best of any museum. There’s lots of local history, and it’s notably strong on fine art. tenbymuseum.org.uk

Heatherton World of Activities

An epicentre of fun for all the family. Paintballing, go-karting, fishing, golf, indoor bowls and baseball are among the options. heatherton.co.uk

Bosherston Lakes

Otters, wildfowl and dragonflies thrive in this designated National Nature Reserve. The lakes are carpeted in lilies, at their very best in late spring / early summer. A magical place. visitpembrokeshire.com



The Writing Shed, Dylan Thomas Boathouse

If there’s a single person who sums up the Welsh creative spirit, it’s Dylan Thomas. If there’s a place, it’s *Laugharne*. Dylan’s old haunts are everywhere, alongside brilliant food and drink, superb places to stay and eye-catching scenery across the town and Carmarthenshire.



There are many more places to explore in Wales, make sure you go online for information and inspiration: visitwales.com | discovercarmarthenshire.com

Eat / Drink	Stay	Play
Browns Dylan Thomas drank in Browns and gave its phone number as his. Its boutique bed and breakfast uses Welsh linen. browns.wales	The Corran Featuring a cosy cottage, lavish great barn and spa, the expanded Corran is a treat for guests seeking luxury and relaxation. thecorran.com	Dylan Thomas Boathouse Peer into the Writing Shed at the writer’s former home, which looks as though he’s just popped out for a pint. dylanthomasboathouse.com
Cors Set within a Victorian house and garden replete with modernist artworks, Cors combines an atmospheric setting with simple, beautiful food. thecors.co.uk	Jabajak, Llanboidy Jabajak is a 5-star restaurant with rooms and its very own vineyard located in a former farmhouse, which has links to the White House and the second president of the US, John Adams. jabajak.co.uk	Laugharne Castle Visit this magnificent medieval castle turned Tudor mansion to see where Dylan Thomas found the lyrical inspiration to cure an episode of writer’s block. cadw.gov.wales
Yr Hen Dafarn, Llansteffan Specialising in locally-caught fish dishes, this gem’s exceptional quality of food means it’s unlikely to remain a secret for long. llansteffan.com/yrhendafarn	Pendine Sands Holiday Park A toddle from the beach and surrounded by countryside, this park will position you perfectly for exploring Tenby and Laugharne. parkdeanholidays.co.uk	Tin Shed Experience A team of volunteers care for fascinating artefacts from the early 20th century in this quirky 1940s museum. tinshedexperience.co.uk



Courtesy of Wright's Food Emporium.

Wright's Food Emporium

Llandeilo sits prettily on a hill overlooking one of the loveliest valleys in Wales. There are plenty of boutiques and cafés to graze, several annual festivals to enjoy, and it's a short walk through a wooded nature reserve to Dinefwr Castle, an ancient royal capital.



There are many more places to explore in Wales, make sure you go online for information and inspiration: visitwales.com | discovercarmarthenshire.com

Eat / Drink

Ginhaus Deli

Choosing from 250 different gins is exhausting, so we tend to ask the friendly staff to pick from that day's specials (and they haven't let us down yet). The food is very superior café-deli fare. ginhaus.co.uk

Wright's Food Emporium, Llanarthney

Imagine if all your home cooking turned out brilliantly, every time. This foodie magnet is a lunchtime favourite, but they do weekend suppers, and guest dinners with big-name chefs. wrightsfood.co.uk

Y Polyn, Nantgaredig

No post-modern foamy nonsense here. Just beautiful produce cooked simply and with respect, in a lovely old country pub. ypolyn.co.uk

Stay

The Cawdor

This handsome coaching inn is the social hub of Llandeilo, so you feel like you're staying in the thick of it. The food is very good, too (and this being farming country, the portions are enormous). thecawdor.com

Llwyn Helyg

Built from scratch in the heart of the Tywi Valley, this luxury country house has already won hatfuls of awards. They also hold music nights in the extraordinary acoustics of their 'Listening Room'. llwynhelygcountryhouse.co.uk

The Castle, Llandovery

This coaching inn, located in nearby Llandovery, has honest categories for its rooms (Good, Better and Best), while its menu champions the merits of authentic, locally-sourced food. castle-hotel-llandovery.co.uk

Play

Dryslwyn Castle

Carreg Cennen is more spectacular, and Dinefwr is more historic. But we've got a soft spot for the ruins of this 12th-century hilltop castle with unforgettable views of the Tywi Valley below. As with so many of these ruins, there's a certain magic to Dryslwyn. cadw.gov.wales

Aberglasney

Again, we're rooting for the underdog. The splendid National Botanic Garden of Wales nearby is bigger, but this beautifully restored 17th-century house and Elizabethan promenade garden is where locals tend to revisit through the changing seasons. aberglasney.org

Brechfa Forest

The mountain bike trails that charge through this huge forest are perfect for all abilities, while the quiet lanes are ideal for roadies. A post-ride pint at the Black Lion in Abergorlech is considered polite. mbwales.com blion.co.uk



Courtesy of Brecon Beacons National Park Authority.

Brecon Beacons National Park

At the heart of the glorious Brecon Beacons National Park, the handsome market town of *Brecon* sits at the middle of three mountain ranges, which are perfect for mountain and waterfall walks, scenic drives, stargazing, and all kinds of family adventures.



There are many more places to explore in Wales, make sure you go online for information and inspiration: visitwales.com | midwalesmyway.com

Eat / Drink	Stay	Play
Felinfach Griffin A cosy pub which is a good option for a gourmet pit-stop, with very tasty food and warming log fires. felinfachgriffin.co.uk	Peterstone Court Chic and distinctive, Peterstone remains loyal to its Georgian heritage, but adds a relaxed style, funky details and modern touches. peterstone-court.com	Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal A wildlife haven that is often voted Britain's prettiest canal. Sail on a narrowboat, small motorboat or eco-friendly electric boat. canalrivertrust.org.uk
Three Horseshoes In the perfect rural location, this well-established hostelry has been family run for 25 years, winning awards along the way. threehorseshoesgroesffordd.co.uk	Crai Valley Eco Lodges A stunning set of family-run self-catering lodges set on a 330-acre (133ha) organic beef and sheep farm. Ideally situated to enjoy leaping lambs, soaring red kites and views of the autumn harvest. craivalleyecolodges.co.uk	Pen y Fan The views from the highest peak in the Brecon Beacons National Park and southern Britain are spectacular – with a range of routes suiting most walkers. breconbeacons.org
Gurkha Corner Few places rival Nepal for diverse flavours, but working from a stone mortar, the chefs here capture that in spicy style. gurkhacorner.co.uk	Gliffaes Country House Hotel, Crickhowell Built in 1888, Gliffaes is a hidden secret, with 33 secluded acres set between the Brecon Beacons and the Black Mountains. gliffaeshotel.com	Waterfall Country, nr Neath The majestic Waterfall Country has the greatest concentration of cascades, caves and gorges anywhere in Britain. Visit the Brecon Beacons' tallest waterfall, Sgwd Henrhyd, which featured as the Bat Cave in the movie <i>The Dark Knight Rises</i> . breconbeacons.org/waterfall-country



The Hardwick

In the south-east corner of the Brecon Beacons, *Abergavenny* is a market town with a tasty reputation. It holds one of the world’s best food festivals every September, and is the home of some of the country’s best restaurants. The lovely Monmouthshire countryside is a short hop away.



There are many more places to explore in Wales, make sure you go online for information and inspiration: visitwales.com | visitmonmouthshire.com

Eat / Drink	Stay	Play
The Hardwick Run by a husband-and-wife team, the award-winning Hardwick’s menu specialises in seasonal and local produce. You’ll be spoilt for choice. thehardwick.co.uk	Angel Hotel The award-winning Angel was a private home in the 1800s and a great coaching inn on the road to London. angelabergavenny.com	Abergavenny Market The Victorian market hall on Cross Street remains a hunting ground for items you just don’t find in ordinary shops. Facebook: Abergavenny Market
Clytha Arms From a quick pint to tasty tapas, this long-established country pub offers great food with open log fires and sofas. clytha-arms.com	Llansantffraed Court Enjoy the charm of a bygone age and the comforts of home in a 20-acre (8ha) setting of breathtaking natural splendour. llch.co.uk	Blaenavon Ironworks These famous ironworks, part of the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape UNESCO World Heritage Site, were a milestone in the Industrial Revolution story. Its beautiful cottages are furnished in three time periods. cadw.gov.wales/daysout/blaenavonironworks
Skirrid Mountain Inn Get the ‘great shiver’ (and sup a beer) at Wales’ oldest and most haunted pub. It has stood for nine centuries. skirridmountaininn.co.uk	The Bear Hotel, Crickhowell A former coaching inn, the Bear’s warmth and friendliness is a 500-year tradition. Accommodation includes oak-beamed rooms and converted stables. bearhotel.co.uk	Skirrid Fawr Of the seven hills surrounding Abergavenny, this is the most rewarding for children. Follow the path to the ruined chapel. nationaltrust.org.uk



©Patrick O'neir, courtesy of Redhouse.

Redhouse

The story of *Merthyr Tydfil* is a tangled tale of romance, hard graft and grit. It’s named after the Welsh princess Tydfil, who was martyred here in the 5th century. By the mid-19th century it was the biggest town in Wales, its ironworks the driver of Wales’ industrial brute force. Nowadays it’s perfectly positioned for long rambles, gritty cycling adventures and grand days out.



There are many more places to explore in Wales, make sure you go online for information and inspiration: visitwales.com | thevalleys.co.uk

Eat / Drink

Jol’s

This hot ticket is a new venture for head chef Jamie O’Leary, who was mentored by Stephen Terry at The Hardwick in Abergavenny. Inspired by the memory of his Merthyr-born grandmother’s cooking, Jol’s is simple and tasty food at its very best. jolsfoodco.co.uk

Plas Coffi

Adding some cool urban street style to Merthyr’s line-up of popular eateries, Plas Coffi is a friendly kitchen-restaurant specialising in rib-sticking classics and wood-fired pizza. plascoffi.co.uk

The Old Barn Tea Room, Pontsticill

Situated near the Pontsticill reservoir, this vintage 18th-century barn is a popular spot for cream teas and Sunday lunches. [Facebook: The Old Barn Tea Room](https://www.facebook.com/TheOldBarnTeaRoom)

Stay

Nant Ddu Lodge

Treat yourself to a luxury spa in this beautiful hotel set on the cusp of the Brecon Beacons – an ideal base for a romantic or active weekend. nant-ddu-lodge.co.uk

Winchfawr Lodges

Affordable luxury lodges well suited for bikers and hikers alike. With BikePark Wales and the Taff Trail close by, this is an ideal hub for both local attractions and longer, grittier adventures. winchfawrlodge.co.uk

Arfryn House B&B

Situated opposite the Llwyn-On reservoir, this cosy and friendly B&B offers home-cooked breakfasts and a packed lunch if you need it for your day out. With Pen y Fan right on your doorstep you’d be silly to forget your walking boots. arfrynhouse.com

Play

BikePark Wales, Gethin Woods

Deemed the UK’s best bike park, this is a must-do for bikers at all levels. Expect the best jump trails, drop offs and gnarly bits you so crave – or swap it all for a family-friendly loop instead. bikeparkwales.com

Cyfarthfa Castle and Museum

Sample what life was like for the Crawshay ironmasters at the grand old house. Spend a day rambling the site’s galleries, museum and vast parklands – the play zone and miniature railway will be popular with the little ones, too. cyfarthfa.com

Redhouse

The Old Town Hall in Merthyr has been reborn as the Redhouse. Built in 1896, this beautiful Grade II-listed red-brick building used to house the magistrates court, council chamber and holding cells. These days it’s home to a restaurant, theatre, gallery and a live music venue. redhousecymru.com



Llangennith, Gower Peninsula

Swansea is the gateway to the Gower Peninsula, the UK’s first Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, full of award-winning beaches, unspoilt countryside and fine dining. It’s a great area for walking, cycling, watersports and golf, and the city has the oldest, biggest (and possibly best) covered market in Wales.



There are many more places to explore in Wales, make sure you go online for information and inspiration: visitwales.com | visitswanseabay.com

- Eat / Drink**
- Morgans Hotel**
Welsh cakes, scones and champagne in a building established in 1902. The rooms are named after ships made in Swansea.
morganshotel.co.uk
- Slice**
Discover why the two chefs behind this intimate, popular restaurant charmed the *Michelin Guide* and the BBC’s *Great British Menu*.
sliceswansea.co.uk
- King Arthur Hotel**
Absorb the relaxed pub atmosphere and sample the seasonal menu at the haunted house named after the nearby Arthur’s Stone.
kingarthurhotel.co.uk

- Stay**
- Fairyhill**
Relax in an 18th-century luxury escape with 24 acres (10ha) of lawns, woodland, streams and lakes, including a distinguished restaurant.
fairyhill.net
- Patricks with Rooms**
Established in 1993, this family-run hotel and restaurant is a great spot from which to enjoy Mumbles in comfort.
patrickswithrooms.com
- Scamperholidays**
In the heart of the glorious Gower Peninsula, these cosily-designed shepherd huts are great places to unwind. Go glamping in style.
scamperholidays.co.uk

I grew up in Porthcawl, but, as a young boy, I loved to visit Caswell Bay in summer, with my bucket and spade. I liked low tide too when I could explore the caves as an exciting adventure.

As a teenager, I was encouraged to try surfing lessons through a disability group, based at Caswell. I have high functioning autism – and, while I found it hard at first, I enjoyed the waves, which are nearly always present at Caswell. I enjoyed it so much that seven years on, I still go there every week. I surf all year round in all weathers, barring storm conditions, enjoying the natural surroundings and the other surfers’ company. If the sea is calm I can venture round to Brandy Cove to explore the big caves. It’s one of the reasons why I love Caswell and why it’s one of the best places to visit in Wales.

surfabilityukcic.org

Luke Hemfrey
Surfer on the Gower Peninsula



- Play**
- Three Cliffs Bay**
Experience the wild across the cliffs, beaches and dunes of one of the most photogenic parts of Gower’s Coast Path.
visitswanseabay.com
- Gower Surf School**
Whether you’re experienced or a first-time surfer, this renowned school prides itself on inclusivity and fun from its promenade hut.
gowersurfing.com
- National Waterfront Museum**
Delve into the industrial and maritime history of Wales, housed in the striking surroundings of a converted waterfront warehouse and a contemporary museum space made of slate and glass.
museum.wales/swansea



Nash Point, Vale of Glamorgan

Cowbridge is a small market town with impeccably good taste. Its roots lie as a Roman settlement and medieval walled town, but nowadays it’s a thriving mix of independent shops, boutiques, restaurants and pubs. It plays host to a popular food festival each year and its location near the Glamorgan Heritage Coast makes it an attractive choice for a break.



There are many more places to explore in Wales, make sure you go online for information and inspiration: visitwales.com | visitthevale.com

Eat / Drink

Hare and Hounds, Aberthin

The Hare and Hounds itself may be 300 years old, but its new Ale House / Dining Room is a thing of beauty. Everything here is made from scratch, from the sourdough bread to the cultured butter.
hareandhoundsaberthin.com

Arboreal

The owners have created an interesting and inspiring environment to house this award-winning town-centre eatery, focusing on simple, honest food and top-notch service.
arboreal.uk.com

The Market Place

Offering familiar favourites and inventive new twists, this inviting restaurant occupies a house built on to medieval walls. History and gastronomy, all under one roof.
the-marketplace.co.uk

Stay

The Bear

A Cowbridge institution with bags of character and atmosphere. The Bear’s history stretches back to the 12th century and its oaky, flagstone-floored bar plays host to both welly-clad farmers and chic champers-sippers.
townandcountrycollective.co.uk

Penfistla Barn

Set in a countryside location near Cowbridge, these pretty stone barns cater to those looking for a slower pace of life. Expect rolling green hills all around and a wood burner to keep you cosy. Pretty much perfect.
penfistla.com

Stockwood Mews

Right in the heart of Cowbridge, the cottage and apartments offer a contemporary slice of country town life. A stone’s throw from the local pubs and shops too.
visitthevale.com

Play

Cowbridge Physic Garden

A restored 18th-century walled garden laid out in 12 sections surrounding a fountain. Each section refers to the healing properties of each plant on a particular part of the body.
cowbridgephysicgarden.org.uk

Llanerch Vineyard, Hensol

Try a vineyard tour and tasting session, or bag a spot on one of TV chef Angela Grey’s short courses or pop-up suppers at the cookery school.
llanerch-vineyard.co.uk

Nash Point

Nash Point offers stunning views across the Glamorgan Heritage Coastline. With craggy stones, rock pools, a lighthouse and tumbling surf, this windswept spot is a true tonic for the soul.
valeofglamorgan.gov.uk



Y Senedd, Cardiff Bay

Europe’s youngest capital city, *Cardiff* is also one of the easiest cities to enjoy. The compact centre offers great shopping, dining and culture, with a rich history and regular sporting excitement thrown in. It also has the lush Vale of Glamorgan and the fascinating ex-mining communities of the Valleys right on the doorstep.



There are many more places to explore in Wales, make sure you go online for information and inspiration: visitwales.com | visitcardiff.com

Eat / Drink

Bar 44

The aroma of sherry casks and the clean lines of a contemporary bar and restaurant. It’s a winning combination, as is Bar 44’s twist on modern, Spanish tapas. bar44.co.uk/cardiff

La Cuina

Delicious, authentic Catalan food. Owner and chef Montserrat founded the restaurant in 2012 after spending 20 years teaching Spanish at Bristol and Cardiff universities. lacuina.co.uk

Bunch of Grapes, Pontypridd

It’s a short drive out of Cardiff to a pub in nearby Pontypridd, known fondly as ‘The Bunch’. The quality and consistency of the food is high and it recently won a Best Sunday Lunch in Britain award. bunchofgrapes.org.uk

The Dead Canary

A speak-easy environment where you can relax, enjoy the best cocktails Cardiff has to offer and kick back to a soundtrack of mellifluous jazz. thedeadcanary.co.uk

Milgi

Owners and sisters Gabrielle and Rebecca produce vegetarian dishes that are great on flavour and imagination. The atmosphere is distinctly bohemian, with a yurt out the back you can relax in. milgicardiff.com

It seems like everything I do has something to do with food, so I naturally think of Cardiff in terms of the places to eat and drink. It’s a very sociable city and it seems like people enjoy having experiences that are different to the ordinary.

One of my favourite places is Cocorico Patisserie. It’s run by Laurian, who came to Wales to support France in the 1999 Rugby World Cup and fell in love with the country. If you time your visit to Cardiff just right, you might catch Street Food Circus, a pop-up street food night market, which takes place from time-to-time. The food is great and the atmosphere is very special. It really shows the independent spirit of the city. purplepoppadom.com



Anand George
Owner of the Purple Poppadom restaurant, Cardiff

Porter’s

A low-key gem, being just outside the perimeter of the bar and restaurant area of the city centre. You’ll find an atmospheric meeting place for coffee by day and a home of vibrant and diverse entertainment by night, including Wales’ first pub theatre. porterscardiff.com

James Sommerin, Penarth

The eponymous chef has an astonishing gift for flavours (which sounds obvious, but you’ll see what we mean when you eat there). The seafront setting in Penarth, a few miles from Cardiff, is great, too. One of Wales’ seven Michelin-starred restaurants. jamesommerinrestaurant.co.uk

"

CARDIFF
HAS MORE
GREEN SPACE
THAN ANY
OTHER MAJOR
UK CITY.

"

Stay
Park Plaza Smack in the heart of the city. The New Theatre is a neighbour, and the shopping area, Cardiff Castle and Principality Stadium are all just a few minutes’ stroll away. parkplazacardiff.com
St David’s Hotel & Spa The most striking of Cardiff’s hotels, with its sail-like roof and uninterrupted ground-to-top-floor glass-fronted atrium. You might bump into the likes of Benedict Cumberbatch or Peter Capaldi, as the BBC’s drama village, Roath Lock, is just down the road. thestdavidshotel.com
Cardiff Caravan & Camping You won’t generally find a caravan and camping site in most city centres, but then Cardiff isn’t most city centres. Just over half-a-mile (800m) from the city centre, its beautiful parkland setting means you’ll still feel like you’ve made your escape. cardiffcaravanpark.co.uk
NosDa ‘Nos da’ means ‘good night’ in Welsh and if you’re looking for a cheap sleep in clean, comfortable surroundings, a bar and live music venue, and the thrills of the city centre on your doorstep then that’s exactly what you’ll get at this friendly hostel. nosda.co.uk
Cathedral 73 73 Cathedral Road is different to the other guesthouses on the same tree-lined route into the city centre. Don’t just take our word for it, let them collect you from the station in their yellow Rolls Royce and show you themselves. cathedral73.com

Play
Cardiff Castle The castle you see today is a Roman fort, an impressive Norman castle and an extraordinary Victorian Gothic fantasy palace. And those clever Romans had the foresight to make sure it was right in the heart of the city. cardiffcastle.com
Wales Millennium Centre An architectural masterpiece and home to the Welsh National Opera and the BBC National Orchestra of Wales. It also stages musicals, stand-up comedy, art exhibitions and fizzes with energy, particularly during school holidays. wmc.org.uk
Bute Park Cardiff offers more green space per person than any of the other nine major cities in the UK. Bute Park is the ‘green’ heart of Cardiff city centre, and at 138 acres (56ha – equivalent to 75 football pitches), it’s also one of the largest urban parks in Wales. bute-park.com
Principality Stadium One of Wales’ most iconic landmarks, this is perhaps the most enjoyable sports stadium in the world, with a perfect city-centre location and an electric atmosphere beneath its huge sliding roof. principalitystadium.wales
Cardiff Bay Cardiff Bay is a diverse waterfront development built around a 494-acre (200ha) freshwater lake. It’s a great spot, full of dramatic architecture, including the elegant Senedd building, home of the National Assembly for Wales, the striking Wales Millennium Centre and the lovely Norwegian Church, where writer Roald Dahl and family would worship. cardiffbay.co.uk



Wales Millennium Centre and Pierhead, Cardiff Bay

Getting to Wales.

Wales is easy to get to. It's only a few hours by motorway from London. By train it's even quicker – just two hours from London to Cardiff. It's the same from Britain's major airports with speedy road and rail links from Heathrow, Gatwick, Birmingham and Manchester.



By Road

Mileage and journey times by car:
Birmingham – Aberystwyth
123 miles (198km), 2hrs 44mins
Bath – Newport
42 miles (68km), 52mins
Canterbury – Cardiff
214 miles (344km), 3hrs 51mins
Coventry – Barmouth
138 miles (222km), 2hrs 56mins
Exeter – Swansea
144 miles (232km), 2hrs 35mins
Leeds – Llandudno
126 miles (203km), 2hrs 31mins
London – Cardiff
151 miles (243km), 2hrs 53mins
London – Tenby
238 miles (383km), 4hrs 29mins
Manchester – Caernarfon
105 miles (169km), 2hrs 19mins
Nottingham – Swansea
204 miles (328km), 3hrs 41mins
Newcastle-upon-Tyne – Llandudno
221 miles (356km), 4hrs 20mins
Reading – Carmarthen
172 miles (277km), 3hrs 2mins
York – Welshpool
152 miles (245km), 3hrs 7mins
Edinburgh – Cardiff
393 miles (632km), 7hrs 3mins
Glasgow – Aberystwyth
331 miles (533km), 6hrs 4mins

Distance / times supplied by:
theaa.com

National Express provides a nationwide network of express coach services linking major towns and cities in Wales as well as the UK's principal destinations. Check out their website for special offers.
nationalexpress.com

You can hop on and off the National Express network with a Brit Xplorer pass. Passes can be purchased online at:
nationalexpress.com/waystosave/brit-xplorer.aspx

Megabus provides low cost intercity travel in the UK, with buses running from a number of major UK cities to locations in Wales.
uk.megabus.com



By Air



Cardiff airport is situated in Rhosneigr, 12 miles (20km) south west of Cardiff. Buses, trains and taxis offer links to the city centre and surrounding area and car hire is available in the terminal building. The Cardiff Airport Express bus service offers a direct link to the city centre every 20 minutes. Citywing also operates a direct flight to Anglesey from Cardiff, enabling you to get to North Wales in around 45 minutes.

For detailed information on flights and how to get to and from the airport by road, rail, bus and taxi go to:
cardiff-airport.com

Airlines from all over the world fly into the London airports, so check with your travel agent or tour operator to find the best option for your journey. Birmingham, Manchester and Liverpool also have a number of international flights, and Bristol airport is very conveniently located for a trip to Wales.

UK airports that offer easy access to Wales:
Birmingham International Airport
birminghamairport.co.uk
Bristol Airport
bristolairport.co.uk
Liverpool John Lennon Airport
liverpoolairport.com
London Gatwick Airport
gatwickairport.com
London Heathrow Airport
heathrowairport.com
London Luton Airport
london-luton.co.uk
London Stansted Airport
stanstedairport.com
Manchester Airport
manchesterairport.co.uk



By Rail

In the UK, fast and frequent rail services run between London Paddington and Cardiff, taking just over two hours. There is a half-hourly departure to Cardiff Central, with an hourly continuation to Swansea and onward connections to West Wales.

There are also direct trains from London Euston and Manchester to Llandudno, Bangor and Holyhead; from Birmingham, Shrewsbury and Crewe to the North Wales coast and the Llŷn Peninsula; from Manchester and Shrewsbury to Newport; and from Portsmouth, Southampton and Salisbury to Cardiff.

From London Heathrow Airport, there's a fast, direct rail service to Paddington, where you can change onto a direct train to Wales. From London Gatwick Airport, you can travel direct to London Victoria, then take the Underground to Paddington or Euston to continue your journey. For general rail enquiries visit:
nationalrail.co.uk
thetrainline.com



By Sea

Ferry crossings from Ireland to Wales:
Irish Ferries: irishferries.com
Dublin Port to Holyhead
Journey time: 1hr 49mins (Fast ferry)
Journey time: 3hrs 15mins (Cruise ferry)
Rosslare to Pembroke
Journey time: 4hrs (Cruise ferry)

Stena Line: stenaline.co.uk
Dublin Port to Holyhead
Journey time: 3hrs 15mins (Superferry)
Dun Laoghaire to Holyhead
Journey time: 2hrs 20mins (Fastcraft)
Rosslare to Fishguard
Journey time: 3hrs 30mins (Superferry)

Ferry crossings from mainland Europe to Great Britain:
Brittany Ferries
brittany-ferries.co.uk
Condor Ferries
condorferries.co.uk
DFDS Seaways
dfdsseaways.co.uk
LD Lines
ldlines.co.uk
P&O
poferries.com
Stena Line
stenaline.com

Cruise ships dock at the Port of Holyhead on Anglesey almost every week between May and September. Cruise lines calling in include Crystal, Hapag Lloyd, Oceania, P&O, Silversea, Swan Hellenic, Thomson, Tui, Voyages of Discovery and Windstar.

For more information on getting to Wales go to: visitwales.com/explore/travel-maps



Getting around Wales.

It’s easy to get around Wales by train, bus, car or even domestic flight. And if you’re keen to explore, you’ll find plenty of journeys that are wonderful experiences in their own right. We have some of the most scenic roads, railways and pathways in Britain.



By Road

The most scenic drives in Wales count among the best in Britain. Some favourite routes with fantastic views include the A466 along the Wye Valley, the B4574 from Rhayader to the Vale of Rheidol, the A4069 across the Black Mountain range, the A4086, A498 and A4085 around Snowdon and Marine Drive around Great Orme in Llandudno.

When you’re out and about in the National Parks, use the convenient park and ride bus services designed to cut down on traffic:

pembrokeshire.gov.uk or gwynedd.gov.uk

National Express operates long-distance intercity coach services to many towns and cities throughout Wales. For more information and to plan your journey go to: nationalexpress.com

Megabus runs a low-cost coach service between Cwmbran, Newport, Cardiff, Swansea, Carmarthen and Pembroke Dock. uk.megabus.com



By Rail

Rail services run through the regions of Wales – usually on highly scenic routes such as the Cambrian Coast, Conwy Valley and Heart of Wales lines.

thecambrianline.co.uk
scenicwales.co.uk
heart-of-wales.co.uk
nationalrail.co.uk
arrivatrainswales.co.uk

For pure pleasure why not take a ride on some of the 14 narrow gauge and steam railways? Many are members of the Great Little Trains of Wales. greatlittletrainsofwales.co.uk

Additional Information

For up-to-date and reliable public transport information: traveline-cymru.info

For a handy route planner: theaa.com or rac.co.uk

For information on UK road regulations: gov.uk/browse/driving/highway-code



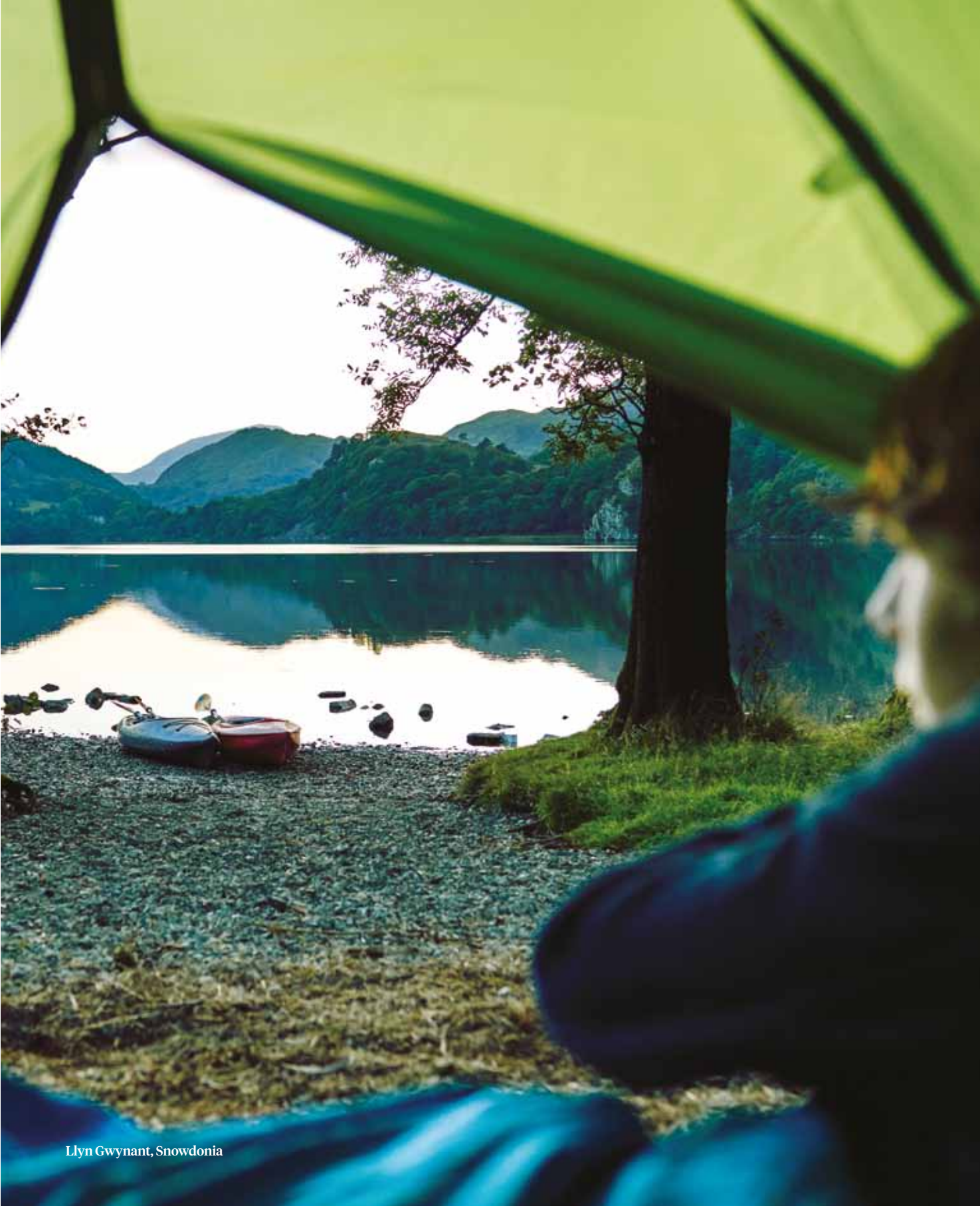
Discounted rail and bus travel

The Explore Wales Pass offers unlimited travel on all mainline rail services in Wales plus most scheduled bus services. Holders will also benefit from discounted entry to many tourist attractions and selected accommodation. The Explore Wales Pass (£99) allows four-day train and eight-day bus travel. The Explore South Wales, North Wales and Mid Wales Passes (£69 each) allow four-day train and eight-day bus travel within each regional area.

There are also a number of Rovers and Rangers tickets available, which all offer unlimited train travel for one day on specific areas of the Arriva Trains Wales network. They can be purchased from the station booking office or on board the train.

arrivatrainswales.co.uk/explorewalespass

For more information on getting around Wales: visitwales.com/explore/travel-maps/getting-around-wales



Llyn Gwynant, Snowdonia

Free brochures
Find out more about Wales by choosing some of the FREE guides available. Check them out, and order or download them from: visitwales.com/brochures

Other Visit Wales websites
There are a number of other really useful Visit Wales websites to get information on the different types of activities you can try on your holiday in Wales.

Adventure: visitwales.co.uk/active
Fishing: fishing.visitwales.com
Mountain Biking: mbwales.com
Walking: walking.visitwales.com
Golf: golfasitshouldbe.com

For up-to-date information on short breaks and longer holidays in Wales, go to the official website: visitwales.com

Mother Tongue
When the Romans arrived in Britain, every person in what is now England and Wales spoke the same language: Welsh (or at least, British, the Celtic language from which modern Welsh is descended). Successive invasions from mainland Europe drove the British language to the western edges of Britain, where it evolved into Welsh, Cornish and the now-extinct Cumbric. The language also hopped across to north-west France, where the Breton language is still partly intelligible to Welsh speakers.

Nowadays Welsh is spoken by around a fifth of the population, especially in the north and west of Wales, where it is many people’s everyday working language. You’ll also hear quite a bit of Welsh in major towns and cities like Cardiff, where the government and all major public bodies are fully bilingual. So if you want to know what our ancient British ancestors sounded like, just find your nearest Welsh speaker and say *shwmael*!

A sense of place
Place names tell a story in Wales. You’ll see the same words appear time and again on our road signs, and they’ll always tell you something of the local history or landscape. Two in particular appear very often: Llan indicates a church or parish, usually followed by the name of the saint to whom it’s dedicated, as in Llandudno: the church of St Tudno. Aber means the mouth or confluence of a river, as in Aberaeron: the mouth of the river Aeron.

Here’s a list of common names to look out for on your travels:	
Aber	mouth / confluence of river
Afon	river
Betws	chapel
Blaen	source of a stream
Bryn	hill
Bwlch	a mountain pass
Caer	fort, fortified camp
Capel	chapel
Cas, castell	castle
Coed	forest
Cwm	valley
Din	hill fort
Dinas	city
Dyffryn	valley
Eglwys	church
Ffordd	road
Ffynnon	spring
Glyn	deep valley
Gwaun	moorland
Hafod	summer
Hendre	winter farmstead
Llan	church, sacred enclosure
Llyn	lake
Môr	sea
Mynydd	mountain
Nant	brook
Newydd	new
Plas	hall, mansion
Pont	bridge
Rhaeadr	waterfall
Traeth	beach
Tŷ	house
Ynys	island

How do I know I’m booking good quality accommodation?
When choosing your holiday accommodation, look for the Cymru / Wales quality mark of Wales’ official, nationwide quality assessment scheme. Visit Wales and the AA are the only checking agents in Wales, checking out over 5,000 properties. Both assess holiday accommodation to the same criteria and award one to five stars, based on the facilities and overall quality of the experience. Also look out for that extra-special property that has been awarded Visit Wales’ Gold Award, given for exceptional standards of hospitality, comfort and food in serviced accommodation.
For more information on accommodation in Wales, the Cymru / Wales Quality Assessment scheme, general grading information and star ratings go to: visitwales.com/holidayaccommodation

I’d like to learn some Welsh before my visit – where do I start?
Take a look at the following websites to pick up some basics:
bbc.co.uk/learnwelsh
s4c.co.uk/dysgwyr
saysomethingin.com/welsh

If you’d like to learn Welsh in Wales, the Nant Gwrtheyrn Welsh Language & Heritage Centre specialises in residential courses for adults learning Welsh.
nantgwrtheyrn.org

Accessible Wales
If you’re planning a holiday in Wales and have a mobility impairment or any other special requirements, then there are a number of ways to help you choose accommodation and activities that are suitable to your needs.
Tourism for All is a free specialist information service promoting accessible tourism. It offers free guidance on travel planning, transport, accommodation and booking:
tourismforall.org.uk

For the UK’s biggest directory of accessible accommodation and travel, visit: openbritain.net
For finding accessible places for all to enjoy in Wales, visit: accessiblecountryside.org.uk

Where can I get local tourist information?
One of the simplest and quickest ways of getting local information is by calling in to one of our Tourist Information Centres. The staff are highly trained, have an excellent knowledge of the area and will be delighted to help you with booking your accommodation, finding places to eat, things to do, routes to take, national and local events and obtaining maps, guides and books. Normally, offices are open between 10.00 and 17.00. For a list of Tourist Information Centres see: visitwales.com/contact/touristinformation-centres

Travel agents and tour operators in the UK and Ireland.
To make it really easy to book your holiday or short break in Wales you could use a tour operator. There are a number of UK and Irish companies who offer Wales-based holidays. They often have specialist knowledge of particular products and will be happy to help you find the right holiday to suit your needs. For companies go to:
visitwales.com/touroperators

Selling Wales to your clients
If you work in the leisure travel trade or business tourism sectors, we have a dedicated website to help you sell Wales to your clients and enhance existing tours to Wales or help introduce Wales into UK programmes for the first time. There’s everything from great places to visit, how to get here, inspiring itinerary ideas, operator and venue searches and the latest product news where you can sign up to receive regular product updates.
traveltrade.visitwales.com

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure accuracy in this publication, Visit Wales can accept no liability for any errors, inaccuracies or omissions or for any matter in anyway arising out of the publication of the information. All websites listed are checked at the time of going to press. However, Visit Wales cannot be held accountable for any change in the content of these websites.
visitwales.com



Cartograffeg gan Cosmographics
Cartography by Cosmographics

© Cresso Cymru - Llywodraeth Cymru 2011
© Visit Wales - Welsh Assembly Government 2011

Map syfianol drwy garedigrwydd CollinsBartholomew ©
Base map by kind permission of CollinsBartholomew ©

Year of Legends 2017

A celebration of ancient history and modern thinking. On your travels you may come across giants, poets, wizards and a fiery red dragon. Some of these characters will be thousands of years old. Others will be modern-day legends in the making. Let them lead you on an epic adventure.

