

Eryri | Snowdonia

Mynyddoedd a Môr
Mountains and Coast

CAMBRIAN COASTLINE LLŶN PENINSULA SNOWDONIA NATIONAL PARK



THE WAY AHEAD



Zip World Penrhyn Quarry

Things are changing in Snowdonia Mountains and Coast. We're now home to a bucket list – full of outdoor activities like ziplining, canyoning, underground adventures and – would you believe? – inland surfing.

Then there's our accommodation scene. You can stay at hotels that leap straight off the pages of interior design magazines. Or go cool camping or glamping under our Dark Skies, stargazing from around the campfire.

Times change too – by which we mean that travel experiences and short breaks throughout the year are as much part of our portfolio as traditional summer seaside holidays.

Having said all that, let's not forget the bedrock of our appeal – our rugged landscape and sweeping coastline,

walks and castles, vital Celtic identity and strong sense of place. There's rare quality and variety in the things to see and do here, from our charming little railways to engaging family attractions.

You'll barely scratch the surface on a day trip, so do yourself a favour and book in for a few days or weeks. It's all here in this guide, together with information on the The Wales Way, a collection of curated touring routes that help you make the most of your visit. It's the way to go.

Roger Thomas, Editor

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Join the conversation and keep in touch

Keep up to date with what's happening and what's new by joining us on our social networks. Don't forget, it's a two-way process. Let us know what you think, and share your thoughts, images and videos with others.

visitsnowdonia.info

 facebook.com/visitingssnowdonia

 twitter.com/visit_snowdonia

 flickr.com/visit_snowdonia

 pinterest.com/visitsnowdonia

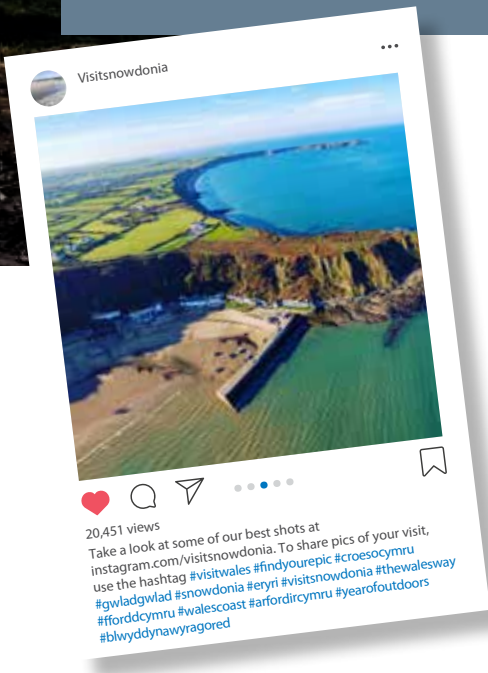
 instagram.com/visitsnowdonia

 youtube.com/VisitSnowdonia

Taking care



We all want to do what's best for our precious – and increasingly fragile – environment. A few simple measures can go a long way. Please use public transport (it's a real pleasure in this part of the world) and recycle wherever possible, and keep the use of plastics and single-use items to an absolute minimum. Here in Wales we're committed to making the country the world's first refill nation, with the initial focus on providing refill stations for free drinking water along the Wales Coast Path. For more details go to refill.org.uk/refill-wales



To reach this part of the world you'll be travelling with a light footprint. And when you arrive, there are plenty of green alternatives for getting around. For more information go to traveline.cymru

Getting to us

By train

Direct services take you to the popular North Wales coastal destinations from most parts of Britain. Make inland connections via the Conwy Valley Line (conwyvalleyrailway.co.uk) which runs through the Snowdonia National Park to Betws-y-Coed and Blaenau Ffestiniog. Services from the Midlands through Shrewsbury and Machynlleth link up with the Cambrian Coast Railway thecambrianline.co.uk. For National Rail information and enquiries visit nationalrail.co.uk

By coach

For National Express information visit nationalexpress.com

By car

There's quick, straightforward access from the North West along the M56 and A55. Motorway links with the Midlands are good too, and the same roads – the M6, M5 and M1 – also bring Snowdonia Mountains and Coast within easy reach of the South of England.

By sea

Irish Ferries (irishferries.com) and Stena Line (stenaline.co.uk) operate regular and high-speed services to Holyhead from Dublin. For southern Snowdonia Mountains and Coast, ferry services from Rosslare to Fishguard and Pembroke Dock are a handy alternative.

By bike

Reach bike-friendly Snowdonia Mountains and Coast by following the National Cycle Network (nationalcyclenetwork.org.uk). Quiet, traffic-calmed and traffic-free routes give good access from the surrounding area and further afield.

By air

Transfers available from the international gateways of Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham and Cardiff. manchesterairport.co.uk liverpoolairport.com birminghamairport.co.uk cardiff-airport.com

Getting around

Plug in and charge



If you're visiting in an electric vehicle, you'll find plenty of charging points throughout Snowdonia Mountains and Coast. Plug in and recharge everywhere from the National Trust's Cwrw Farm at the tip of the Llŷn Peninsula to the Centre for Alternative Technology near Machynlleth. For a full list of charging points visit zap-map.com

Local services

Avoid the hassle of bringing a car and travel green on one of our local bus services. The Snowdon Sherpa is an easy-to-use option that allows you to enjoy the spectacular sights and attractions of Snowdonia Mountains and Coast while someone else does the driving. Head to gwynedd.llyw.cymru/publictransport for info on this and other local buses.



Be an explorer

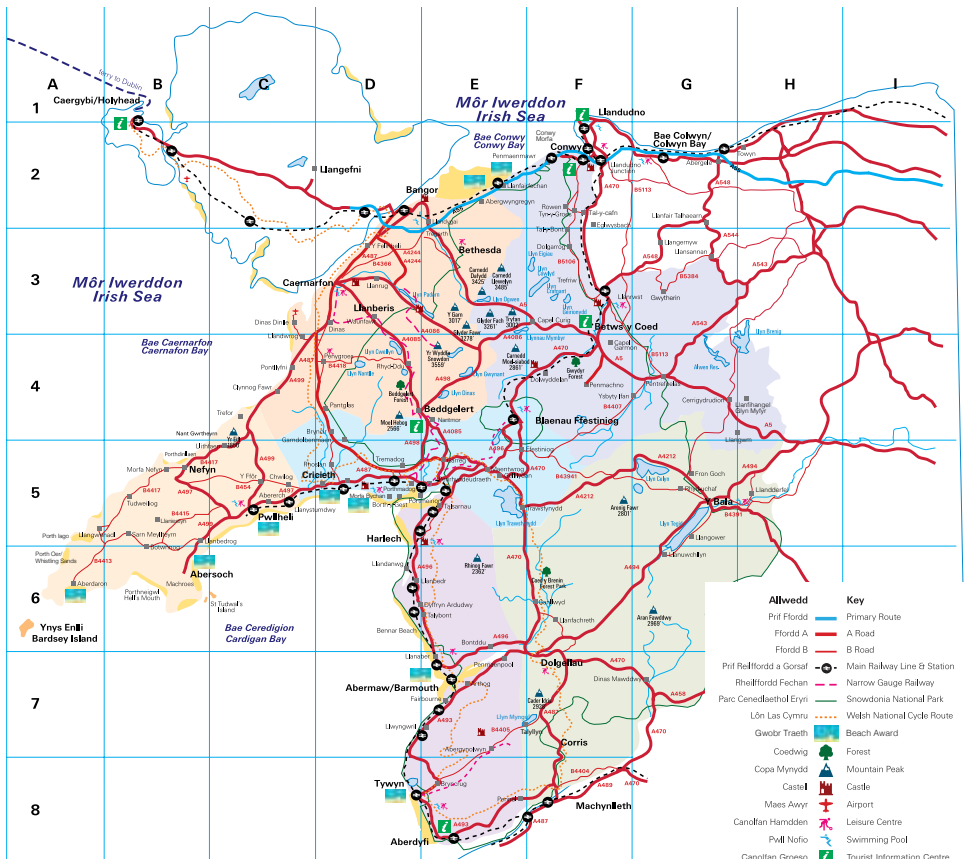
Pick up an Explore Wales pass from Transport for Wales (tfwrail.wales/ticket-types/explore-wales) and enjoy four days' travel within an eight-day period by train and most bus operators. For shorter stays, grab a North Wales Rover (tfwrail.wales/rovers-and-rangers/north-wales-rover) which gives you unlimited access to trains and buses for a whole day.

Stopping over

There are pay-and-display car parks where you can leave your vehicle overnight in towns like Aberdyfi, Bangor, Barmouth, Caernarfon, Dolgellau and Harlech. While many accept card payments, be aware that some are cash only. For the latest information go to (gwynedd.llyw.cymru/parking)

Snowdonia 360 -

Providing a focus of discovery for visitors, the Snowdonia 360 (snowdonia360.com) is a circular tourism route through Conwy, Anglesey and Gwynedd. A mixture of coastal, country and mountain roads – bringing together the best of the Snowdonia region. 364 miles of stunning scenery, things to do, places to stay and eat along the way.



Welcome to Snowdonia Mountains and Coast. Perhaps we should change our name, for our rocky peaks and sandy beaches are just the start of the story. We cover a whopping near-1,000 square miles, a space that embraces not just Snowdonia's summits but also hidden valleys, misty moors, ancient oakwoods, dreamy estuaries, secluded coves, forest-fringed lakes and rushing rivers.

The outdoor activities and experiences on tap are equally varied. There are little trains and big castles, adrenaline sports and wish-list walking trails, arty galleries and an appetizing food scene. Not forgetting the green appeal of the Snowdonia National Park and Llŷn Peninsula, a designated 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty'.

And it's all here, ready to go, throughout the year. Your season ticket lasts 12 months, taking in everything from the green shoots of spring to cosy, cossetting winter breaks. We don't expect you to take all of this in in one gulp. To ease you into what's on offer we've split our region into six areas.



Crickieth, Porthmadog and the Vale of Ffestiniog

Oakwoods, beaches and a shot of adrenaline

There's coast – the southern shores of the Llŷn Peninsula and the hauntingly beautiful Dwyryd Estuary. And there's country – lots of it, including chunks of mountain and the wooded Vale of Ffestiniog. So you're not short of scenery. This part of Wales is especially rich in history, heritage and culture. Don't miss the unique Italianate village of Portmeirion and Blaenau Ffestiniog, the old slate capital reborn as an internationally acclaimed activity centre.



Cardigan Bay

A castle-crowned Cambrian Coastline

Along with the Llŷn Peninsula, Cardigan Bay puts the 'coast' into Snowdonia Mountains and Coast. Mountains meet the sea all along this lovely shoreline – but most memorably at two outstandingly beautiful estuaries, Mawddach and Dyfi (part of the environmentally outstanding UNESCO Dyfi Biosphere Reserve). Other highlights include mighty World Heritage Site-designated Harlech Castle, Barmouth (come for the seaside – and spectacular sunsets), picturesque Aberdyfi and little railways at Fairbourne and Tywyn.



Southern Snowdonia

More mountains – plus lakes and forests

We have our own north/south divide. Southern Snowdonia still has mountains – lots of them – but they are greener and rounder than those up north. Cader Idris dominates the scene, rearing its misty head above Dolgellau, while further east the Arans, Arenigs and Berwyns rise above Bala and Llyn Tegid, Wales's largest natural lake. There are forests too – most famously, the Coed y Brenin Forest Park, known far and wide for its world-class mountain biking.



Conwy Valley and Hiraethog

History, wooded hills and heather moors

What a difference a few miles can make. The green, fertile Conwy Valley is flanked on the west by thick forests. Cross to the east and you'll enter Hiraethog (also called the Denbigh Moors), a vast expanse of heather moorland set beneath big skies that's just the place to bring out the explorer in you. All in all, this is an area of great variety, with the mountain village of Capel Curig at one end and the historic walled town of Conwy at the other. In between you'll find Betws-y-Coed, a buzzing country resort, and the world's first inland surfing lagoon at Adventure Parc Snowdonia, Dolgarrog.



Bangor, Caernarfon, Llanberis and the Villages of Snowdonia

Tops for mountains, castles and activities

Mister Big in these parts is – guess? – Yr Wyddfa/ Snowdon, the highest mountain in Wales and England. But it's by no means the only attraction. There are mountain lakes and wooded valleys too, and a coastline of big beaches and sheltered straits. Man-made places also make it into the big league, especially world-famous Caernarfon Castle. And attractions like Zip World Penrhyn Quarry have helped bring Snowdonia Mountains and Coast worldwide fame as an all-year activity hot spot.



Llŷn Peninsula

Landscapes, seascapes and nature reserves

It's 'Snowdon's arm', a wildly beautiful peninsula that wraps you in a strong embrace. Llŷn's mix of culture and heritage, traditional farmsteads and little ports, beaches, bays and sea-cliffs is quite unlike anything else you'll find in Wales – or elsewhere, for that matter. Little wonder, then, that the coast is a protected 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty'. Walk it by following the Llŷn Coastal Path.

Snowdonia National Park

With 823 square miles of skyscraping peaks, deep wooded valleys, rolling moors, craggy coastline and soft, sandy beaches, the Snowdonia National Park is one of the world's most alluring places. For more information on all the walks and activities listed below, visit snowdonia.gov.wales.

Summit special

Mighty, mist-shrouded Snowdon is one of the Park's headline stars and the busiest. It's the tallest peak in England and Wales (and the place where Sir Edmund Hillary and his team trained to conquer Everest).

But Snowdon is just one of 14 summits in the Park measuring more than 3,000ft/914m. It's well worth spreading your wings and getting off the beaten track to explore places like boulder-strewn Carnedd Dafydd in the Carneddau range and the jagged rocky outcrops of Glyder Fawr. Make sure you're ready to enjoy our mountains safely by checking the information on [pages 8/9](#) before you head out.

The beautiful south

Another high-altitude alternative to the crowds on Snowdon is a walk up Cader Idris. Looming above Dolgellau in the south of the Park, this mountain's moody silhouette cuts an unmistakable sight on the skyline. Take the shorter, steeper Minffordd Path which runs through the Cader Idris National Nature Reserve, or follow the longer and gentler Llanfihangel y Pennant Path with its views of the Dysynni Valley and ruins of Castell y Bere, a gnarled, atmospheric native Welsh castle.

Take it easy

You don't have to tackle lung-busting ascents to enjoy getting out and about in the Snowdonia National Park. Choose from a wide selection of leisurely walks on flat and easy terrain, ranging from a two-mile stroll through wooded Cwm Penamnen near Dolwyddelan to an 18-mile network of interlinked paths criss-crossing Dyffryn Maentwrog's landscape of oak forest and lakes.

Short, 'accessible for all' walks suitable for wheelchair users and prams are also plentiful. Stroll a section of the nine-mile Mawddach Trail between Barmouth and Dolgellau (also a popular route for gentle bike rides). Or follow the boardwalk through woodland on the shores of Llyn Cwellyn, set amongst steep slopes between Beddgelert and Caernarfon. You'll find a full list of leisurely and accessible walks on the National Park website snowdonia.gov.wales



The National Park by numbers

Highest point: Snowdon's
3,560ft/1,085m summit

37 miles of coast

434 miles of rivers

1,498 miles of footpaths

Largest natural lake: Llyn
Tegid, Bala, covering
3.95 square miles

Longest beach: **4.35-mile**
Morfa Dyffryn, near Llanbedr
4 million visitors every year

237 square miles of Sites of
Special Scientific Interest

Largest moorland: Y Migneit
above Ffestiniog measuring
55 square miles



Lights out

Even when the sun goes down there's still plenty to see in Snowdonia. Thanks to its wide-open spaces and low levels of light pollution, the National Park is a designated International Dark Sky Reserve. One of only three in the UK (and just 13 worldwide) it's the ideal place for stellar stargazing. On a cloudless night you'll be treated to crystal clear celestial panoramas of twinkling constellations, the Milky Way and nebulas shimmering in the infinity of space. Llŷn's Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is also hoping to be designated, so keep checking our website for the latest updates.

Ask the experts

Take the stress out of choosing where to walk in the Snowdonia National Park. Every month one of the Park Wardens shares a favourite route in the 'Walk of the Month' section of the Park website. You'll find walks for all abilities, from mountain hikes to shady woodland strolls, with lots of information on animal and plant life to watch out for at different times of the year.

Delving deeper

Learn more about Snowdonia at Plas Tan y Bwlch, the National Park's study centre. This handsome country house, set amongst beautiful gardens and grounds near Maentwrog, runs residential courses embracing all aspects of the Park, from wildlife to walking, art and crafts to history and industrial heritage. The house and gardens are open all year and the Dwyryd tea room is open from Easter to October.

Be Adventure Smart

We all love hills and mountains. They're beautiful to look at and exhilarating to explore on foot. But they can also present unexpected challenges and dangers. Be fully prepared for the rugged terrain and changing conditions in Snowdonia Mountains and Coast. Ask yourself three questions before you set off:

- Am I confident that I have the **KNOWLEDGE** and **SKILLS** for the day?
- Do I know what the **WEATHER** will be like?
- Do I have the right **GEAR**?

ADVENTURE
SMART.UK



Be Adventure Smart

Make plans for an enjoyable and safe day out in the hills and mountains by:



Checking the weather forecast and ground conditions on [metoffice.gov.uk](https://www.metoffice.gov.uk). Remember to check conditions for different points on your route. If the weather worsens or if conditions are beyond your capabilities it's OK to turn back.



Knowing your limits and where you're going. It's okay to challenge yourself but be conscious of the experience and fitness levels of the whole group. Choose a route that suits everyone in your group. And don't get stuck in the dark – allow enough time to get back down in good light conditions.



Carrying the right gear, including a map, compass, torch, whistle, small first-aid kit, mobile phone and food and drink.



Staying warm and dry. Wear walking boots, carry insulating layers, gloves, hat and waterproofs. Don't forget the sun hat and sunscreen on a warm summer's day.



Letting the experts show you the way. If you're not experienced or don't know the area consider joining a guided walk or signing up for a course.

Find out about skills courses at adventuresmart.uk/develop-your-skills/

Be sure to:

- Whether you are heading to the mountains or out on the water go to adventuresmart.uk for the information you need to make your good day better!
- Follow the Countryside Code found at naturalresources.wales
- Always check [metoffice.gov.uk](https://www.metoffice.gov.uk) for up-to-date weather reports and [snowdon.live](https://www.snowdon.live) for the latest readings from the weather station on the summit of Snowdon



Here's one revealing fact: it's just 10 miles from the top of Snowdon to the sea. Here's another: our coastline stretches for around 200 miles. So when we call ourselves Snowdonia Mountains and Coast, the watery, sandy bit is just as important as all those peaks, forests and moors.

Sandhopping

We have over 35 beaches. Here's a quick run-down, from north to south, of some of our coastal highlights:

- **Penmaenmawr** - long, sandy beach with sailing club and attractive promenade
- **Llanfairfechan** - fun, family-friendly seaside village with large sandy beach. The nearby Traeth Lafan Nature Reserve is a great place for birdwatching
- **Dinas Dinlle, near Caernarfon** - enormous beach with widescreen views to match. Great for walkers, windsurfers and power kites
- **Nefyn** - two miles of sweeping sands, scooped out of the coastline in perfect crescents. The impossibly pretty National Trust village of Porthdinllaen is perfect too
- **Porth Oer, near Aberdaron** - a true one-of-a-kind, with 'Whistling Sands' that really do squeak underfoot
- **Aberdaron** - broad sandy beach on Llŷn's 'land's end', sheltered between two spectacular headlands
- **Abersoch** - one of our most popular resorts. A big hit with families, watersports enthusiasts, shoppers and people watchers
- **Pwllheli South Beach (Marian-y-De)** - a three-mile curve of sand and shingle, backed by rolling dunes
- **Morfa Bychan (Black Rock Sands)** - at over 1½ miles long this big beach's golden sands, rock pools and dunes make it a popular spot for families
- **Harlech** - untouched sandy beach, backed by dunes and theatrically overlooked by Harlech Castle
- **Shell Island, Llanbedr** - sand, dunes and, of course, shells
- **Barmouth/Abermaw** - bustling resort town that boasts a huge sandy beach, plus views over the mountains and Mawddach Estuary
- **Tywyn** - popular surfing beach with almost five miles of sand, and also a good place to spot dolphins and porpoises
- **Aberdyfi** - dramatically located at the mouth of the Dyfi Estuary, this big sandy beach is great for windsurfing and wildlife spotting

Award-winning beaches

For the latest information on our Blue Flag and Seaside Award-winning beaches go to visitsnowdonia.info/beaches-and-coastline



Abersoch



Llŷn and the Cambrian Coast

Jutting into the sea like an outstretched arm, the Llŷn Peninsula is a sanctuary of Celtic culture, wildlife and pristine coastal beauty. This protected landscape of historic interest, Special Area of Conservation and Heritage Coast is home to 90 miles of secluded bays, rocky headlands and friendly little resorts. And the beauty goes on and on further south, on the Cambrian Coastline's beaches, headlands and mountain-backed estuaries, the inspiration of painters and poets.

Sealicious

Local menus feature catch-of-the-day seafood. Tuck into sealicious lobster, crab and scallops caught in Llŷn's clear waters, fresh sole or bass landed by local boats, or that famous Conwy speciality – rich-tasting mussels sustainably hand-raked from their natural home on the seabed, a centuries-old industry (to find out more go to the Mussel Museum on the quayside).

Wild things

Much of our seashore is protected as National Parkland, Heritage Coast, and 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty'. As you'd expect, wildlife thrives here – go dolphin-spotting in Cardigan Bay, or catch the boat to Ynys Enlli/ Bardsey Island, a National Nature Reserve with an international reputation for its wealth of wildlife and spectacular seabird colonies, including Manx shearwaters.

Park the car

Explore our coastline by train or bus. It's easy. Local bus services take you almost everywhere. And for the ultimate 'train with a view' with between-station walking 'trailways' en route, ride the Cambrian Coast line that travels along Cardigan Bay from Aberystwyth to Pwllheli. Or catch the 'little trains' that run to Blaenau Ffestiniog and Caernarfon from Porthmadog.

Be Adventure Smart

Stay safe on or near the water with rnl.org/safety. Don't get cut off by the tide check the tide times with tidetimes.org.uk

Go The Wales Way

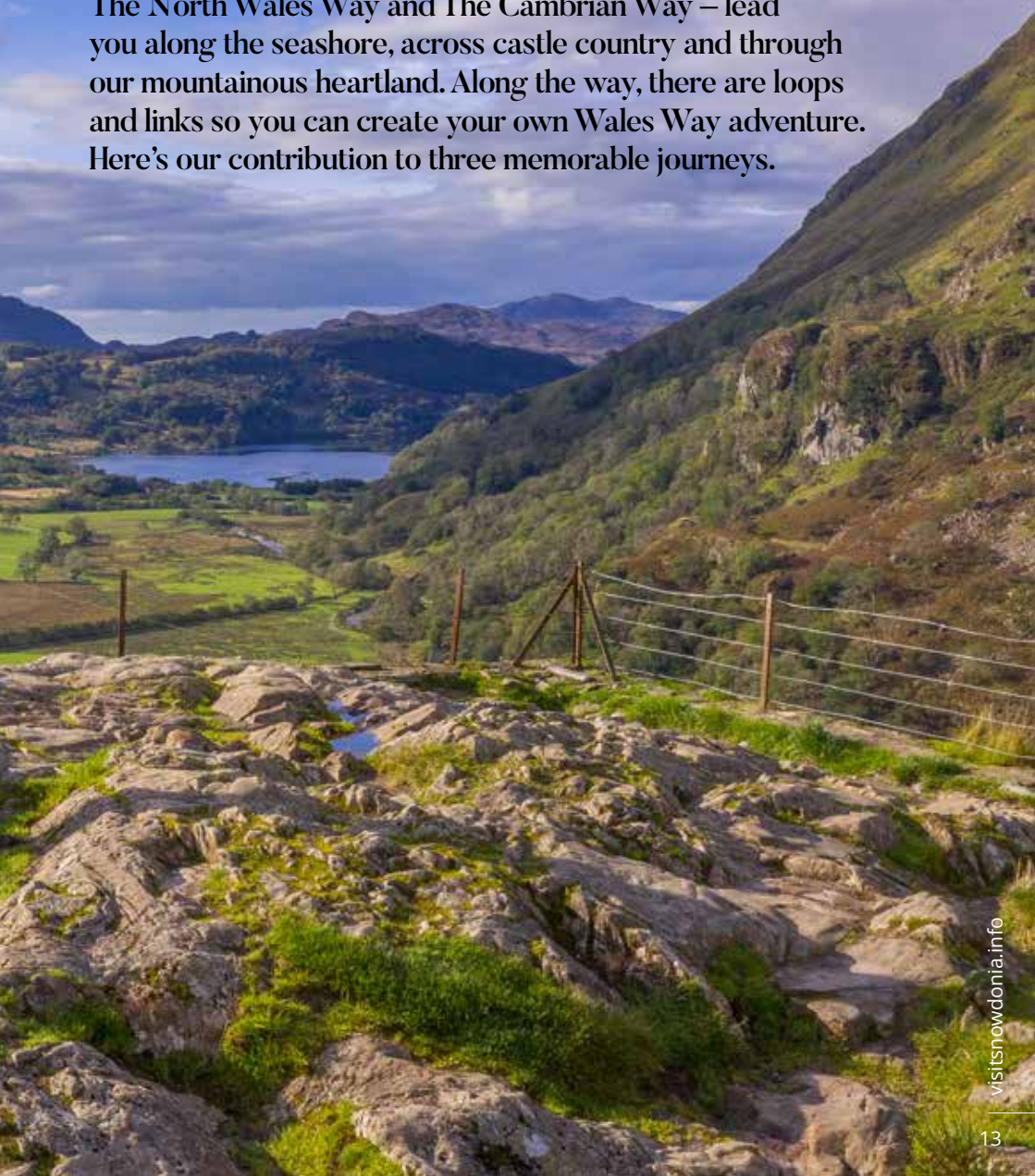


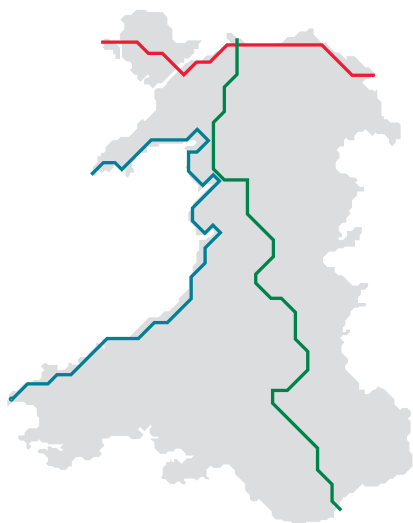
Llyn Gwynant



If you're looking for inspiration for your trip to Snowdonia Mountains and Coast, check out The Wales Way.




This family of three touring routes – The Coastal Way, The North Wales Way and The Cambrian Way – lead you along the seashore, across castle country and through our mountainous heartland. Along the way, there are loops and links so you can create your own Wales Way adventure. Here's our contribution to three memorable journeys.





The way to go

We've barely scratched the surface of things to see and do along The Wales Way. For more ideas – plus some carefully curated itineraries – head to visitsnowdonia.info/wales-way

-  The North Wales Way
-  The Coastal Way
-  The Cambrian Way

The Coastal Way

Where it goes

Stretching from Aberdaron at the western extreme of the Llŷn Peninsula to St Davids in Pembrokeshire, the Coastal Way takes in the unbroken 180-mile sweep of blue, dolphin-friendly Cardigan Bay.

Coastal Way highlights in Snowdonia Mountains and Coast

Take a boat trip out to mystical, magical Bardsey, just off Llŷn's tip. In the words of poet RS Thomas there was a 'resurrection/of nature' at this 'green/ island' with its 'anointed air'. Known as the 'Isle of 20,000 saints' thanks to its wealth of religious sites, it's also a prolific nature reserve that's home to 310 different species of bird.

There's amazing art at Oriel Plas Glyn-y-Weddw, a Gothic mansion in Llanbedrog surrounded by 12 acres of glorious gardens, and historical drama at battle-scarred Crickieth Castle and the mighty towers of Harlech Castle (overlooking Royal St David's, one of the UK's best links golf courses). You'll find more history at Dinas Oleu, a wild hillside above the seaside town of Barmouth where the National Trust was born.



The North Wales Way

Where it goes

Following the old trading route along the coast from Flintshire into Anglesey, the 75-mile North Wales Way features lively resort towns, soaring World Heritage Sites and plenty of jumping-off points for inland exploration.

North Wales Way highlights in Snowdonia Mountains and Coast



See rock star castles at Caernarfon and Conwy – both World Heritage Sites. For an urban stroll with a difference take a tour along the top of Conwy's ancient town walls, which stretch an unbroken $\frac{3}{4}$ miles around the huddled medieval centre.

Explore the opulent interiors of Bangor's National Trust Penrhyn Castle, a fantastical fortress built by the wealthy Pennant family in the early 1800s, then lose yourself amid the foliage of the jungle-like Bog Garden in its grounds. For a little sea and sand, take your buckets and spades to fun, family-friendly Llanfairfechan beach. Be sure to bring your binoculars too – nearby Traeth Lafan Nature Reserve is a top spot for birdwatching. For culture trippers there's art and history at STORIEL and music, theatre and cinema at Pontio, both in Bangor.

The Cambrian Way

Where it goes

Tracking Wales's mountainous spine from Llandudno to Cardiff, the 185-mile Cambrian Way winds through the peaks of both the Snowdonia and Brecon Beacons National Parks.

Cambrian Way highlights in Snowdonia Mountains and Coast

Head underground at Blaenau Ffestiniog to explore the inky depths of Llechwedd's historic slate mines. You can also 'Bounce Below' on a huge subterranean trampoline before flying high at Europe's largest zip zone. Go off-grid with a walk in Cwmcwllt, a moody expanse of wilderness at the foot of the Rhinog mountains where herds of wild ponies roam.

Adrenaline junkies can ride waves and zip lines at Adventure Parc Snowdonia in the Conwy Valley, or tackle the bone-shaking trails at mountain bike mecca Coed y Brenin Forest Park. For a peek into Welsh culture and history, visit Yr Ysgwrn near

Trawsfynydd. This little farmhouse, once the home of poet Hedd Wyn who died in World War One, still houses the famous Black Chair he was posthumously awarded at the 1917 National Eisteddfod.



Mawddach Estuary



Choose your season – any one will do, for they're all equally appealing. You might be looking for the winter warmth of a country pub, or the green shoots of spring in the Vale of Conwy. Or sun, sand and sea for your summer holiday, or pure autumn gold along the Mawddach Estuary.

Snowdonia Mountains and Coast has a year-round appeal. To get you in the mood, here we introduce you to a handful of many things to see and do whatever the weather, whatever the season. For the full picture take a look at the following [pages 18/25](#).

Spring and summer

The lambs are out. The fields are green. There's a freshness in our forests, and your options are multiplying by the minute as the days get longer. And along the coast we're revving up for a busy summer when our beaches – over 35, strung out along a 200-mile shore – really come into their own. It makes you want to get up and go. To start you off, here are a few ideas.

Go underneath the arches.

Actually, make that arch – the Laburnum Arch at beautiful Bodnant Garden in the Conwy Valley. It's at its best in late May, when the drooping yellow blossoms create a shining 180ft/55m tunnel that serves as the perfect stepping stone from spring into summer.

Catch the train, take a walk.

Jump on to the Cambrian Coast Railway – one of Britain's most scenic – then hop off for a between-station 'trainways' walk. Or, from the UK's '20 Best Coastal Walks' highlighted in The Times, walk 6¾ miles of the wonderful Wales Coastal Path between Harlech and Llandecwyn train stations.



Park (or parc) it.

The kids will love Greenwood Family Park near Caernarfon. It has won nearly every award in the book, and on the strength of its clever, eco-friendly attractions, is 'one of the greenest theme parks in the world'. Glasfryn Parc near Pwllheli is also packed with activities for all the family.

Count castles.

There are 641 in Wales and – if we may be so bold – we reckon we have some of the best here in Snowdonia Mountains and Coast: three World Heritage Sites, to be precise, at Caernarfon, Conwy and Harlech.

Fly by wire.

You may have noticed that in recent years we've become famous for our zip lines and outdoor adventures. Bethesda boasts the world's fastest zip line (at 100mph, no less). It was so successful that there are now two more 'Zip World' sites at Betws-y-Coed and Blaenau Ffestiniog.

Autumn and winter

There's no need to hunker down in your own bunker when the nights draw in. Snowdonia Mountains and Coast is buzzing with activities and experiences throughout the year. Book into a cosy hotel, sit by a roaring fire, blow your socks off on a bracing winter walk, and feed body and soul on tasty food, soothing spa treatments and great entertainment. So why not...

Go down to the woods.

You're sure for a big surprise, for in addition to walking paths lit by fiery autumn colours you'll find some of the best mountain biking trails in the world (not to mention winter trail running – at night time).

Immerse yourself in our arts scene.

Festivals, theatre, art and crafts, galleries, museums... Snowdonia Mountains and Coast has a thriving cultural scene that, if anything, seems to notch up a gear in the so-called 'quieter' months.

Curl up, chill out.

Soak up the warmth of a log fire in a cosy country pub. Book into a spa and wellness centre beside the sea (The Quay at Deganwy or Portmeirion's Mermaid Spa, for example) or in the heart of the country (Betws-y-Coed's Waterloo Hotel is another good choice).



Ride the waves.

Adventure Parc Snowdonia in the Conwy Valley is home to the world's first inland surfing lagoon, where the perfect waves arrive like clockwork whatever the weather. If that's not enough there's also all manner of adrenaline indoor and outdoor activities on tap.

Become a star trekker.

Our Dark Skies are at their inkiest and revealing in autumn and winter. We're one of the world's few Dark Sky Reserves so you'll see stars and peer into deep space.

Our A-List

The following eight pages are dedicated to the adventures, activities and attractions you'll find in Snowdonia Mountains and Coast. We give you the lowdown on everything from wellbeing to watersports, little trains to large castles, food to art and crafts. We'll spring a few surprises along the way, with news of things like the fastest zip line in the world and the UK's deepest cavern, the TV-star village that thinks it's from Italy and the theme park that's eco-friendly and family-friendly.

WE'RE ON YOUR WAVELENGTH

We are sailing

Our rivers, lakes and seas are awash with watersports. You can go sailing or paddleboarding, kayaking or surfing. Sailing fans head for the open seas or sheltered Menai Strait from havens, harbours, marinas and slipways all along the coast. The Plas Menai National Outdoor Centre on the shores of the Strait is one of many places offering multi-activities, including sailing, windsurfing and kayaking.

Pwllheli, at the gateway to some of the UK's finest sailing waters, is home to Hafan Pwllheli, a superb 400-berth marina, and Plas Heli, the Welsh National Sailing Academy and Events Centre.



Fresh (and white) water

Inland, our lakes and rivers also overflow with aquatic action. Float your boat on the UK's highest sailing venue at Llyn Brenig, one of Wales's largest areas of inland water 1,200ft/365m up on the Denbigh Moors. Bala's Llyn Tegid, the biggest natural lake in Wales, is a thriving watersports centre. It's close to the River Tryweryn, a torrent that guarantees white-water (and white-knuckle) rafting thrills at the National White Water Centre, where anyone who doesn't mind getting wet can have a go.

Go kayaking on beautiful Llyn Gwynant near Beddgelert or Llyn Padarn at Llanberis. Other lakes popular for watersports include Llynau Mymbyr near Capel Curig and Llyn Geirionydd, hidden away in the Gwydir Forest, the only lake in Snowdonia used for power boating and water skiing.



Surf's up

Adventure Parc Snowdonia in the green Conwy Valley boasts the world's first inland surfing lagoon, which produces better and more frequent waves than any of Britain's beaches. Having said that, when conditions are right the surfing is pretty awesome on the Llŷn Peninsula at places like Porth Neigwl (its alternative name, Hell's Mouth, says it all). For a great day's wakeboarding go to Glasfryn Wake Parc, an innovative attraction suitable for beginners and seasoned pros where everything is laid on for you.

If you fancy an adrenaline buzz without getting wet – and the rare experience of whizzing under the Britannia Bridge and Thomas Telford's Menai Suspension Bridge – then take a ride on a RIB powerboat along the Menai Strait.

ONLINE

Go sea angling from our shores and deep-sea boats. Or head inland for game fishing on rivers and lakes (Llyn Myngul near Abergnolwyn, for example, has superb brown trout fishing). There's good coarse fishing too at places like Llyn Trawsfynydd, which has excellent facilities for anglers.

GOLF AS IT SHOULD BE

That's the style of golf on offer here in Wales – golf that's played in the true spirit of the game on quality courses renowned for their welcome and friendliness. Our mix of golfing venues suits all abilities and includes three of the UK's top 100 clubs. Tee off from the beach at Nefyn and Aberdyfi, or play against the backdrop of Harlech Castle at Royal St David's. Conwy Golf Club, venue of the 2020 Curtis Cup, is also well worth a visit.

HORSES FOR COURSES

Everyone from absolute beginners to experts are welcomed at our riding and trekking centres. The terrain is pretty varied too. Explore the wooded bridlepaths of the lovely Vale of Ffestiniog or gallop along the beach on the southern shores of the Llŷn Peninsula.

TRAILFINDING

Coed y Brenin Forest Park near Dolgellau is famous for its mountain biking. But did you know that it's also home to the UK's first bespoke trail running centre? There's a network of five waymarked trails suitable for novices and experienced runners ranging from one to over 13 miles, all set amongst a beautiful landscape of rivers, woods and moors. There's also a trail running store and busy year-round events programme that includes endurance marathons and night runs.

FAMILY ATTRACTIONS

Small is beautiful

We're the world capital of narrow-gauge railways. The Snowdon Mountain Railway does what it says on the tin, taking you to the top of the highest peak in Wales and England. Close by there's the idyllic Llanberis Lake Railway. For Britain's longest heritage railway hop on the 25-mile Welsh Highland from Caernarfon to Porthmadog – then go even further on its sister line, the classic Ffestiniog Railway, all the way to Blaenau Ffestiniog.

Also in Porthmadog is the charming Welsh Highland Heritage Railway, while down the coast there's tiny Fairbourne (our smallest, with a gauge of just 12¼ins). You'll find the world's first preserved railway – the Talylyn – at Towyn. A deserved winner of North Wales's 'Best Tourism Business of the Year', its museum has a section devoted to the Reverend WV Awdry, creator of Thomas the Tank Engine.



Snowdon Mountain Railway

The Corris Railway also goes back a long way, with origins dating from the 1850s. And the best way by far to enjoy the views across the water in Bala is on the Bala Lake Railway.



Talylyn

Just the ticket

Glasfryn Parc near Pwllheli is packed with activities, including go karting, ten-pin bowling, wakeboarding, kayaking. GreenWood Family Park near Caernarfon is one very green attraction, winner of many awards for its eco credentials. Ride the world's first eco-friendly people-powered rollercoaster and Solar Splash, the UK's first solar powered ride. Also near Caernarfon there's Gypsy Wood Family Park, which combines the magic of fairies with the charm of animals.

You're in a cave, on a boat at King Arthur's Labyrinth, Corris, floating past tableaux and sound-and-light shows that bring Arthurian legend to life. At Caernarfon, Yr Hwylfan/The Fun Centre is North-west Wales's biggest indoor adventure play centre.



King Arthur's Labyrinth

'Wales lends itself so well to many activities and adventures. Snowdon is an international icon and encapsulates the spirit of Wales and the Welsh people.'

Bear Grylls

A REALLY BIG ADVENTURE

Adrenaline runs in our veins. It all started in Penrhyn Quarry with the bold plan of installing a zip line. Not any old zip line, mind you, but the fastest (think 100mph) in the world. They haven't looked back since. The company – Zip World – now has three sites, each very different. In addition to the original near Bethesda there's Zip World Titan at Blaenau Ffestiniog (where you can also 'Bounce Below' on a giant underground trampoline) and Zip World Fforest at leafy Betws-y-Coed.

At Go Below Underground Adventures, also near Betws-y-Coed, you can abseil down to the deepest point in the UK (and – if you haven't had enough zippy experiences already – whizz along a subterranean zip line). Adventure Parc Snowdonia in the Conwy Valley, which began life as Surf Snowdonia, now offers all kinds of activities, including an exciting indoor adventure course, high-wire challenges and (you've guessed it) a zip line over the surfing lagoon.



Zip World Slate Caverns

WILD IN THE COUNTRY

Pack your binoculars, for they're sure to be kept busy when you visit our mountains, woods, estuaries and shores, habitats rich in birdlife. The RSPB Conwy Reserve, for example, is a 'wildlife oasis on the edge of Snowdonia' whose star species include lapwing, sedge warbler and shelduck. But our greatest feathery stars are to be found near Beddgelert at Bywyd Gwylt Glaslyn Wildlife, where incredibly rare ospreys can be viewed by telescope and live remote coverage.

ARTS ALIVE

You've only got to look at the force-of-nature paintings by great Welsh artist Sir Kyffin Williams to see how this dramatic part of the world inspires creativity in art and crafts, theatre and music. Wherever you travel you'll come across galleries, studios, workshops and performance spaces.

A-listers include STORIEL in Bangor and the Royal Cambrian Academy in Conwy (both of which hold changing art exhibitions), and Llanbedrog's Oriel Plas Glyn-y-Weddw, a stunning space dedicated to contemporary art and outdoor theatre performances.



Oriel Plas Glyn-y-Weddw

The cultural programme at Pontio, Bangor University's Arts and Innovation Centre, embraces theatre, cinema, comedy and music. In Caernarfon, Galeri combines art spaces with cinema, workshops and performances. To see how local elements like wool and slate become fertile raw materials fostering creativity, visit Trefriw Woollen Mill where wool is converted into colourful Welsh tapestry, and Inigo Jones Slate Workshops at Penygroes, in business for over 150 years.

Studios at the Corris Crafts Centre specialise in a range of hand-made crafts. At Parc Glynllifon near Caernarfon there's more creativity and individual skill on display at a cluster of craft workshops.

Arts online

For more on our arts scene visit creativegwynedd.com. And check out the Helfa Gelf Arts Trail at helfagelf.co.uk

Pant Du Vineyard and Orchard



FOOD AND THE FEELGOOD FACTOR

Good food, wellbeing, comfy accommodation, soothing spas... they're things that can be enjoyed throughout the year. In fact, we'd go as far as to say that a meal beside a crackling fire after a walk in the woods is an experience tailor-made for spring or autumn. And how better to lift the winter gloom than a reviving spa break beside the sea or in the heart of the country?

EAT

Lonely Planet reckons that 'North Wales has also become a haunt of in-the-know foodies'. It's not just polished cuisine and fine dining, we hasten to add (though it's very much on the menu at ritzy country and coastal restaurants and hotels). For a more laid-back dining experience you're also served with good food cooked with care and passion in homely cafés, bistros and inns.

No surprise, really, with such inspirational local produce on the doorstep like Welsh Black beef and lamb (mountain and the tender saltmarsh variety), super-fresh seafood straight from the fishing boat, artisan farmhouse cheeses ...

even local wine, gin and beer. It's a bountiful local larder used by chefs and cooks to produce everything from hearty, honest-to-goodness simple fare to imaginative, precisely flavoured dishes.



Dylan's Chrydeith

DRINK

Aber Falls Distillery near Bangor and Dyfi Distillery in Corris produce award-winning gins made from locally foraged botanicals. There's wine too, from Pant Du Vineyard and Orchard near Penygroes, and craft beers from Porthmadog's Purple Moose Brewery (another award winner) and Cwrw Llŷn, Nefyn.

SLEEP

Imagination, artistry and flair have transformed our entire hospitality scene. Take accommodation. Nowadays, you can stay at boutique B&Bs, chic hotels and luxury self-catering that are bang on-trend, with wellness and spa breaks thrown in for good measure.

'Wales is way ahead of the UK when it comes to sustainable eco-living,' reckons The Sunday Times. So expect to find offbeat, quirky places that are redefining the old notion of holiday accommodation. How about a Mongolian yurt, shepherd's hut, eco-retreat, hand-crafted cabin in the woods or beach lodge? All with mod cons, of course. Or a glamping lodge beside an inland surfing lagoon or slate cavern?

Going for gold

In Snowdonia Mountains and Coast more than 100 different properties have won the prestigious Gold Award from Visit Wales. And they really are different, ranging from cosy B&Bs to grand country house hotels. Take a look at our website to see what's on offer. To give you a taste here's the editor's choice of a cross-section.

A very big house in the country.

With its wood-panelled halls and elegant rooms (some with romantic four-poster beds), **Bron Eifion** is a country house hotel with plenty of old-world charm. Despite its peaceful location amid five acres of immaculately tended gardens, it's only a short walk to the village of Criccieth (and the beach).

Get a taste of this. Plas

Bodegroes, a restaurant with rooms near Pwllheli on the Llŷn Peninsula, has been a foodie mecca for more than 30 years. Feast on locally sourced ingredients like

Welsh Black beef, saltmarsh lamb and seafood (plus fresh produce grown in the kitchen garden), safe in the knowledge you won't need to travel far to get to bed.

On the farm. If you're looking to get away from it all, **Tyddyn Mawr** is a good choice. Nestled at the foot of Cader Idris near Dolgellau, this 18th-century farmhouse turned luxury guest house is a tranquil escape ideal for birdwatchers, nature-lovers, photographers or anyone in search of tranquillity.

Boutique in Bala. Plas

yn Dre is an historic building on Bala's High Street. There's nothing ancient or creaky about the accommodation, which cleverly balances old with new, traditional with contemporary. As well as luxury rooms you'll enjoy tasty food with the accent on fresh, locally sourced produce.

Within these walls. Enjoy some time on the town at the **Castle Hotel**, snug within Conwy's medieval walls. Originally a coaching inn, it's been taking in guests for centuries (including a certain 13-year-old Princess Victoria, who visited in 1832). Though it's changed quite a bit since those days, this warm and welcoming townhouse hotel is still fit for a Queen.

Comfortable and

convivial. Warm, welcoming and supremely comfortable, **Tŷ'n Rhos** is the perfect base from which to explore the northern half of Snowdonia Mountains and Coast. Scenically located on a hillside between Caernarfon and Bangor with far-reaching views, this country house boasts individually styled bedrooms, a spacious conservatory and fine dining restaurant.

SEE OVERLEAF FOR MORE A-LIST IDEAS >

SHOP

Some say it's the ultimate therapy – even better than a spa break. We'll leave that for you to decide. But we can certainly tempt you with a very special choice of shopping experiences.

Our shopping scene prizes the personal over the pre-packaged, the hand-made over the mass-produced. Of course, you'll find the usual high street names, but they are just a small part of our unique retail landscape. Our key selling point is a huge stock of friendly, independent businesses offering one-of-a-kind items created in and inspired by our spectacular surroundings. Here are just a few highlights to whet your appetite.

In the food mood? Then Bodnant Welsh Food in the Conwy Valley is the place to go for the tasty combo of shopping and eating. It showcases the very best Welsh artisan produce, from organic veg to cheeses, mountain lamb to delicious treats. There's also the Furnace restaurant (serving everything from wood-fired pizzas to freshly baked scones) and the Hayloft for superb Sunday lunches.

The long (and the short) of it.

Good shopping hot spots include Bangor (its high street is the longest in Wales), Betws-y-Coed, Caernarfon, Conwy, Llanberis, Porthmadog and Pwllheli.

Perfect pottery. The fantasy village of Portmeirion is a magical shopping location, with a choice of chic boutiques, including a Portmeirion Pottery outlet.

Outdoor types. Adventure hub Betws-y-Coed is the place for outdoor gear and accessories. There's also an impressive collection of independent craft and gift stores. It's great for Christmas shopping too. There's also plenty of choice at Llanberis the village at the foot of Snowdon.



Market forces. Local produce markets are held at Bethesda, Conwy, Dolgellau and Porthmadog (ask locally for details). Market days take place at Barmouth on Thursday (and Sunday, summer only); Caernarfon on Saturday (and Monday May–September); Llanrwst on Tuesday; Porthmadog on Friday; Pwllheli on Wednesday; and Tywyn on Monday (summer only).



Buy local. Look out for this logo when you're out and about – it means that the shop has signed up to the Buy Local Gwynedd campaign. You'll be helping yourself find something distinctive and special – and also helping the local community.

HOME AND AWAY

Wales is a patchwork of places, each of which has its own strong 'sense of place'. We even have words for it in Welsh like hiraeth and cynefin which allude to the deep-rooted spirit of a location and the attachment it inspires. Snowdonia Mountains and Coast has its own spirit, which emanates from its rocky, volcanic mountains, bays, beaches and estuaries. That's why it has such a strong appeal to the people of Wales as well as the many visitors it welcomes from the rest of Britain and overseas.



THE PERSONAL TOUCH



Build your own perfect trip to Snowdonia Mountains and Coast by using the My Guide Book on our website. If you see something you like on the site, whether it's one of our award-winning attractions, a tempting restaurant or welcoming place to

stay, just click the My Guide Book button to add it to your personal itinerary. It's the easy way to keep track of the hundreds of things to see and do across the region.

AND FINALLY...

It's always good to get a second opinion. Lonely Planet has been very complimentary about us on a number of occasions. For example, they've rated Snowdon, Tryfan, Portmeirion and the Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railways highly within their 'Ultimate UK Travelist of Top 500 Experiences'.

The 'views are sublime' from Snowdon's summit, while triangular Tryfan 'ranks among Britain's most distinctive peaks'. Italianate Portmeirion is a 'surreal settlement ... lived in by no one but visited by thousands'. Not surprisingly, it's a TV star, appearing as the suitably otherworldly setting for the cult 1960s TV series *The Prisoner* (and featured in ITV Cymru Wales's *The Village*). And for mountain biking, Coed y Brenin 'tops the list of pedal-powered adrenaline rushes'.

SPEAK UP

With a large proportion of Snowdonia Mountains and Coast's population speaking Welsh as their first language, our mother tongue is a huge part of our culture. It's an everyday working language which you'll hear spoken in the streets and see on signs everywhere. It can be a bit tongue twisting, but – like any language – you can pick up the basics with a tiny bit of perseverance. Here are a few greetings to start you off. Learn more at Nant Gwrtheyrn National Welsh Language and Heritage Centre.

croeso

–welcome

helo

–hello

diolch

–thanks

iechyd da!

–cheers!

nos da

–good night

We have a compelling tale to tell. Its chapters feature towering castles and deep, dark mines, and an unmistakably Welsh culture that's rooted in bygone times but looks to the future. It's safe to say that the past is alive and well in Snowdonia Mountains and Coast.

Made of stone

Castles dot our coast and countryside. Fortresses at Caernarfon, Conwy and Harlech, put up by King Edward I in the 13th century, are so impressive that they've been designated World Heritage Sites. While these big hitters often grab the headlines, castles like weatherbeaten Criccieth – perched in a prime strategic spot above Cardigan Bay – come with their own equally significant stories of conquest and conflict.



And let's not forget our native castles, built by Wales's very own Princes of Gwynedd, which make up in atmosphere what they may lack in stature. Dolbadarn, for example, keeps a lonely watch over the waters of Llyn Padarn and the Llanberis Pass, while Castell y Bere, strung along a jagged rocky outcrop, guards an ancient, forgotten route through the foothills of Cader Idris. For more on our castles visit cadw.gov.wales and snowdoniaheritage.info

Can you dig it?

Castles aren't our only rock stars. You can't tell Snowdonia's story without mentioning slate, once quarried here in enormous quantities. Venture into huge underground caverns created by slate mining at Corris, Llanfair and Llechwedd (where you can also tour the rubble-strewn quarries on the surface in a rugged 4x4 truck). At Sygun Copper Mine near Beddgelert an atmospheric self-guided audio-visual tour takes you back to the world of the Victorian copper miner.

History also lives on at the National Slate Museum in Llanberis, where buildings and workshops have been preserved as if the last shift had just clocked off. Inigo Jones Slateworks near Caernarfon (founded in 1861) still fashions slate into everything from clocks to cake stands.

Slate heritage and high-tech come together at Electric Mountain – also in Llanberis – where you can take an awesome tour of a massive hydro-electric plant buried inside a slate mountain.

We're so proud of our slate landscape, and the contribution the industry made to engineering, transport, technology and culture across the world. **Keep up-to-date with our bid for UNESCO World Heritage Site status by visiting lechi.cymru**





Welsh winners

The modest farmhouse of Yr Ysgwrn near Trawsfynydd packs a lot into a small package. The home of celebrated poet Hedd Wyn, who died in Flanders in 1917 during the First World War, shines a light on Wales's bardic traditions and the impact that war had on our communities, as well as serving as a time capsule of rural life here in the early 20th century. Little wonder that it picked up a Europa Nostra European Heritage Award in 2019 for the quality of its conservation.

Another winner is Nant Gwrtheyrn, the National Welsh Language and Heritage Centre that occupies a once-abandoned quarrying village on the northern shore of the Llŷn Peninsula. Thanks to its investment in cultural heritage, it snagged a European Commission RegioStars award.



House proud

In the hills above Penmachno you'll find the National Trust's Tŷ Mawr Wybrnant, a small 16th-century farmhouse with a huge cultural significance. It was the birthplace of Bishop William Morgan, famous as the first man to translate the Bible into Welsh, thus preserving the language for future generations. Other Trust properties include Plas yn Rhiw, a 16th-century manor house on Llŷn with immaculate ornamental gardens and stunning sea views, and the grandly Gothic Penrhyn Castle, Bangor, built in the 1800s with wealth from North Wales's booming slate trade.

Conwy's Plas Mawr ('The Big House') takes you back to Elizabethan times and the privileged lifestyle enjoyed by the gentry of that period. Just down the road there's the UK's 'Smallest House', a minute quayside cottage once lived in by a fisherman over six feet tall.



Story time

To explore Llŷn's maritime, natural and cultural heritage pay a visit to Porth y Swnt, a unique National Trust visitor centre that tells the peninsula's story through innovative exhibitions featuring multimedia displays, sculpture and artworks. At Bangor there's STORIEL. Located in a beautifully renovated space in the Old Bishop's Palace, it contains striking collections of artefacts from Gwynedd's long and eventful past – everything from Roman swords and the crowns of ancient kings to folk and social history.

Maritime museums at Nefyn and Porthmadog tell salty tales about our seafaring past, while sleepy Llanystumdwy is home to a fascinating museum dedicated to fiery politician David Lloyd George, who became Prime Minister during World War I, and spent his childhood in the village.

Walking is what we do. Fancy a solitary stroll across moody moorland or a breezy beachside ramble? Or a high-altitude hike through historic landscapes or a town trail along medieval walls? Then you've come to the right place.

Myyddi Mawr, Aberdaron



Pilgrim's progress



Extending into the sea like a great, rocky arm, the Llŷn Peninsula is one of the wildest and most dramatic places in Snowdonia Mountains and Coast (and a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to boot). There's nowhere quite like it.



Soak up Llŷn's unique personality with a walk along part of the Pilgrim's Way, the 130-mile route that stretches from Basingwerk Abbey in Flintshire to Aberdaron at the peninsula's western tip. Tracking Llŷn's northern edge, it's a journey through a constantly shifting landscape of hidden coves, picture-book fishing villages, sandy bays and jagged sea cliffs (and, at Nefyn, around a perfectly formed stunning mini-peninsula).

Round and round



Check out our Coastal Circular Walks leaflet for looping routes ranging from short strolls to longer hikes. See

the tumbling Rhaeadr Fawr waterfall and enjoy views of the Carneddau mountains, Menai Strait and Isle of Anglesey on an easy four-mile trip from Abergwyngrenyn near Bangor. Or tackle a more challenging 10-mile walk from Maentwrog near Porthmadog, immersing yourself in the lovely valley carved by the Dwyryd River and dipping into Coed Camlyn Nature Reserve (keep your eyes peeled for puffing steam engines as the walk follows a section of the historic Ffestiniog Railway).



For a circular walk on a larger scale, try some or all of the Snowdonia Slate Trail. Starting beside the sea at Bangor, this 83-mile route takes you to places you might never otherwise discover, including dramatic remnants of Snowdonia's industrial past, sleepy villages, rugged mountain ranges and steep river valleys. Visit snowdoniaslatetrail.org for more information.



Coasting along



The 870-mile Wales Coast Path is a world's first. Following our entire shoreline from north to south, it's become a must-do experience for many walkers.

You'll find some of its most stunning stretches in Snowdonia Mountains and Coast, particularly if you're a fan of sandy seaside strolls. The long golden beach at Penmaenmawr is a highlight, while windy, widescreen Dinas Dinlle near Caernarfon boasts some of our most expansive coastal views.

Off the beaten track

Walk on the wild side in Hiraethog, an enchanting expanse of heather-strewn moors, thick forests, wide-open spaces and big skies. Laid out around the high-altitude waters of Llyn Brenig are an interweaving network of footpaths, peaceful lanes and quiet country roads offering long linear routes and bite-sized circular walks. If you're lucky, you may spot one of Llyn Brenig's population of nesting ospreys as you go. The lake's excellent visitor centre is the perfect first port of call for more information and walks around the shore.

Wildlife lovers should head to Hiraethog's Clocaenog Forest for a chance to spot black grouse, wild Przewalski horses and the largest population of red squirrels in Wales.



On the town

You don't have to head into the wilderness to enjoy a good walk. For an urban adventure follow Conwy's Town Trail on a timewalk through the medieval town. Along the way you'll pass the grand Elizabethan townhouse of Plas Mawr and the tiny harbourside fisherman's cottage that's said to be the smallest house in Britain. The highlight though, in more ways than one, is the walk along the top of Conwy's ancient town walls.

Go to beachy Barmouth for a stroll along the 125-year-old railway bridge spanning the mouth of the gorgeous Mawddach Estuary, where Snowdonia's mountains slide into the sea. Admission: Perhaps we're biased, but it's one of our all-time favourites.

You're welcome

Look out for this logo next to accommodation. It means that your hosts go the extra mile in welcoming walkers.



Be Adventure Smart

Please see [pages 8/9](#) for advice and information on staying safe when walking in our hills and mountains.

They reckon that cycling is the new golf. Judging by the large numbers of Lycra-clad road cyclists and the go-discover, sophisticated range of mountain bikes now available, this may well be true. Add the incredible growth in popularity of e-bikes, plus the world-class achievements of two proud Welshmen on two wheels (step forward Geraint Thomas and Sir Dave Brailsford), and it's safe to say that cycling is on a roll.

But please don't think cycling is something that can only be enjoyed by mileage-hungry masochists intent on conquering hairpinned hills and muddy forests. Here in Snowdonia Mountains and Coast we have everything from extreme to serene, from the steepest street in the world (honestly, you'll find it in Harlech*) to flat, family-friendly trails and traffic-free coastal cruises.

** Ffordd Pen Llech is officially the world's steepest street, with a lung-busting verified gradient of over 37%.*

Do it the Brailsford way

Local hero Welsh-speaking Sir Dave Brailsford hails from the village of Deiniolen near Llanberis. 'I've been lucky enough to travel the world riding bikes,' he says, 'but for me only one place really stands out and that's home.' Follow in his wheeltracks on Ffordd Brailsford, the Brailsford Way.

Actually, make that plural for there are two themed cycling routes – one 50 miles long, the other 75 miles – that take in the very best of Snowdonia's stunning scenery. Along the way you'll encounter challenging climbs and rewarding descents, not to mention local cafés where Sir Dave likes to have 'a cup of coffee and a chat with the locals'.



Cycling, cake and coffee

It's the combo all cyclists love – a good place to park the bike safely for some rest and refreshment. Here are five great choices.

Aberdaron: Becws Islyn Bakery and Coffee House

Nefyn: Caffi Cwrw Llŷn (based at an independent craft beer brewery)

Penygroes: Caffi Gerlan (based at Inigo Jones Slateworks) and Y Banc (a local deli)

Tanygrisiau: Lakeside Café

We all like bikes

You don't have to be a Tour de France wannabee. Our highways and byways include gentle trails and recreational routes suitable for all-comers. Some follow quiet rural paths, others disused railway lines – and they're traffic-light or completely traffic-free.

The Mawddach Trail, for example, is a lazy nine-mile glide along the southern shores of the beautiful Mawddach Estuary from Dolgellau to Barmouth. Find out more by going to Gwynedd Recreational Routes in the cycling section of visitsnowdonia.info

The Llŷn Peninsula and Bala also have an excellent choice of highly scenic routes suitable for everyone – look out, for example, for the Llŷn Circular Cycle Routes leaflet.

E-bikes = easy riding

More and more bike shops throughout Snowdonia Mountains and Coast offer electric-assisted e-bikes for hire. There's a variety of models available, suitable for the road and off-road.

A mountain biking legend

It all started in the Coed y Brenin Forest Park way back in the 1990s. Modern mountain biking in Britain was born here when a bunch of enthusiasts created the first purpose-built singletrack trails.

And how it has grown. Coed y Brenin is now home to around 90 miles of routes. Just like cycling on the road, they cater for all abilities. Macho riders make for the 24-mile Beast of Brenin (think of it as a 'black' run in skiing terms), while mellow, laid-back riders prefer the five-mile Yr Afon 'green' trail. There's also a trail for young children and riders with disabilities.

Going big in Blaenau

Blaenau Ffestiniog, the former 'slate capital of the world', has put those slate mountains to very good use by creating the Antur 'Stiniog mountain biking centre. It has received rave reviews from downhill addicts. 'An awesome trail centre' and 'A brilliant addition to the North Wales MTB scene' are typical comments from breathless bikers.

And there's more world-class mountain biking – all you have to do is head to the Penmachno, Beddgelert, or Gwydir Forests. Or the exciting Dyfi Bike Park near Machynlleth, where you'll find tracks hand-crafted ('I've built what I want to ride') by another biking legend Dan Atherton.

You're welcome

Look out for this logo next to accommodation. It means that your hosts go the extra mile in welcoming cyclists, providing facilities like safe overnight storage of bikes, washing facilities, etc.



Festivals and events are thick on the ground in Snowdonia Mountains and Coast. Whatever the time of year, you'll find a packed programme of things to see and do. Here's a run-down of some of our leading events to start you off. For more details go to our website or social media feeds (see page 1). visitsnowdonia.info | visitconwy.org.uk

All year

Bodnant Garden, Eglwysbach

Guided walks introducing you to this glorious garden's prolific plant and animal life. nationaltrust.org.uk/bodnant-garden

Caernarfon, Conwy and Harlech Castles

Events ranging from medieval re-enactments to 'creepy castle tours' cadw.gov.wales

Conwy RSPB Nature Reserve, Conwy Estuary

A diverse range of events and activities. rspb.org/Conwy

Events at Run Coed y Brenin

Trail running events throughout the year at Coed y Brenin Forest Park near Dolgellau. runcoedybrenin.com

Pen Llŷn Ultra Marathons

Challenging races ranging from 50 to 100 miles in summer and winter. penllynultra.co.uk

February

Cambrian Rally, Llandudno and Conwy Valley

One of the UK's leading motorsports events on classic, challenging forest stages. cambrianrally.co.uk

May

Gŵyl Fwyd Caernarfon

A busy, family-friendly festival of food, drink, music and entertainment. gwylfwyddaernarfon.cymru

Cwrw ar y Cledrau/Rail Ale Beer Festival, Welsh Highland Railway, Caernarfon

It's full steam ahead for railway enthusiasts, beer fans and music lovers. festrail.co.uk

May, June and September

Abersoch Triple Crown

Events - a run, triathlon and half-marathon - held in May, June and September respectively. abersochtriplecrown.com

June

Conwy Pirate Weekend

Swashbuckling entertainment with boat races, pirate costume competitions, live music and lots more. conwypirates.com

Gŵyl Fwyd Pwllheli

A festival of local food, drink and music. facebook.com/gwylfwydpwllheli

Three Peaks Yacht Race and Barmouth 10K

Sail up the wild West Coast from Barmouth to Fort William and run to the summits of Snowdon, Scafell Pike and Ben Nevis. There's also a 10K road race. threepeaksyachtrace.co.uk

Slateman Duathlon and Triathlon, Llanberis

Races combining stunning scenery with epic challenges. alwaysaimhighevents.com

July

Barmouth Food Festival

Food and drink stalls on the harbour and around the quay area.

barmouth-wales.co.uk/foodfestival

Snowdonia Trail Marathon, Snowdonia 24, Llanberis

Panoramic views and tough climbs in dramatic terrain.

alwaysaimhighevents.com

International Snowdon Race, Llanberis

A long-established race attracting over 600 runners from across the world.

snowdonrace.co.uk

Sesiwn Fawr, Dolgellau

Dip into Wales's eclectic, exciting music scene at this great festival.

sesiwnfawr.cymru

Offshore Circuit Racing, Caernarfon quayside

The thrills and excitement of powerboat racing set against a splendid backdrop.

ocrda.com

July/August

Sailing events, Abersoch and Pwllheli

Regattas and competitions (like the Abersoch Dinghy Week) taking place throughout the summer. scyc.co.uk

plasheli.org

August

Race the Train, Tywyn

Who's likely to win: the narrow-gauge Talylyn Railway or the runners?

racethetrain.com

September

Bash Mawr y Bala

Stunning location for this fantastic weekend event.

welshtriathlon.org/events/bala-big-bash/

Barmouth Walking Festival

Walks from easy to challenging in beautiful southern Snowdonia.

barmouthwalkingfestival.co.uk

Abersoch Taste Weekend

Food, fun competitions, tastings, live music and lashings of entertainment.

abersoch.co.uk

Red Bull Hardline

One of the world's toughest downhill mountain bike races. redbull.com

Hurly Burly, Barmouth

Fun, messy and the best way to see out a summer of swimming.

outdoorswimmingsociety.com/bwrlwm-bermo-hurly-burly/

October

Snowdonia Marathon Eryri, Llanberis

Voted best British marathon twice, with a spectacular route encircling Snowdon.

snowdoniamarathon.co.uk

Gwledd Conwy Feast

Local produce, street food, masterclasses, kids' activities, art, craft and music.

conwyfeast.co.uk

Wales Rally GB

One of the must see action-packed motor racing event. walesrallygb.com

November

Snowdonia Walking Festival, Betws-y-Coed

Walks suitable for everyone in the mountains and forests.

breeseadventures.co.uk

November/December

Abersoch Christmas Festival

Abersoch at its most atmospheric during a festive weekend. abersoch.co.uk

December

Portmeirion Food and Craft Fair

A fairytale setting for the best local food, drink, gifts and entertainment.

portmeirion.wales

Head to one of the Tourist Information Centres for help and advice on accommodation, attractions, events and activities. They're featured here, along with other sources for useful info.

Tourist Information Centres

Aberdyfi*,
Wharf Gardens, LL35 0ED
01654 767321
tic.aberdyfi@snowdonia.gov.wales

Beddgelert*
Canolfan Hebog, LL55 4YD
01766 890615
tic.beddgelert@snowdonia.gov.wales

Betws-y-Coed
Royal Oak Stables, LL24 0AH
01690 710426
tic.byc@snowdonia.gov.wales

Conwy
Muriau Buildings, LL32 8LD
01492 577566
conwytic@conwy.gov.uk

Llandudno
Victoria Centre, LL30 2RP
01492 577577
llandudnotic@conwy.gov.uk

* *Open Easter–October*

Tourist Information Points
For information on Tourist Information Points in the area please go to visitsnowdonia.info

Medical information

Ysbyty Gwynedd Hospital
01248 384384
(only use 999 in an emergency)

NHS Direct Wales
0845 4647

Out-of-hours GP service
0300 123 5566

Find out more

We produce a selection of guides on things to see and do throughout Snowdonia Mountains and Coast, available online and in print at Tourist Information Centres. Cyclist can find out about the **Brailsford Way**, which takes in some of our most iconic climbs and descents. For more gentle rides, there are the quiet, largely traffic-free **Gwynedd Recreational Routes**, which can also be tackled on foot. There are stunning seaside strolls to be discovered in our **Coastal Circular Walks** leaflet, plus specially created road trips along the **Coastal Way**, the **Cambrian Way** and the **North Wales Way**.

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ANTUR STRAEON DAN DDAEAR

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y Brenin Arthur



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THE WATERFALL
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DDRAIG

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RIVER

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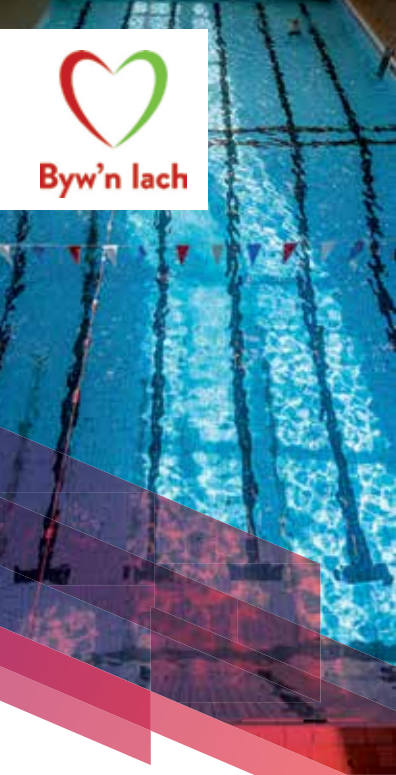
Find us in Southern Snowdonia on the A487
near Corris. Open Easter to October.

☎ 01654 761584 www.kingarthurslabyrinth.co.uk





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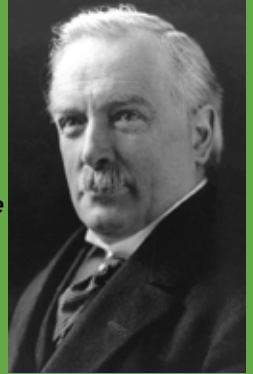
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