



Ffordd Cymru
The Wales Way



The Coastal Way

An epic journey through Wales...

thewalesway.com



The Wales Way is a recently launched family of three national routes that guide you through some of our country's most striking scenery.

The **Coastal Way** runs the entire length of Cardigan Bay. It's a 180-mile (290km) odyssey that threads between blue seas on one side and big mountains on the other. From Aberdaron in the North to St Davids in the South, the coast is dotted with harbour towns and fishing villages, secret coves, vast stretches of sand and magnificent mountains.

Above all, the Coastal Way will give you an opportunity to immerse yourself in the authentic culture of Wales; global renowned attractions, world heritage sites, food and one of the oldest living languages on the planet!

Discover at your own pace

From week-long odysseys to short two-and three-day breaks, the Llŷn Peninsula, through Snowdonia, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire offer so many opportunities to explore and experience Wales at its very best throughout the year. We've put together a few suggestions on what to do and where to visit.

Further information can be found at:

www.visitsnowdonia.info

www.discoverceredigion.wales

www.visitpembrokeshire.com

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Barmouth





Snowdonia Mountains and Coast

Snowdonia Mountains and Coast is home to around 80 miles of the Coastal Way, extending from Aberdaron (the 'Land's End' of the Llŷn Peninsula) to the cosmopolitan resort and sailing centre of Aberdyfi. It runs through the Llŷn's Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, an area that has been designated for its beautiful coastline, and the Snowdonia National Park, a varied landscape of spectacular mountains, steep river gorges, waterfalls and green valleys. To accentuate its distinctiveness, you'll hear Welsh spoken everywhere. It's the oldest living language in Europe, central to the character and culture of this part of Wales.



Criccieth



Llŷn Peninsula



Aberdaron



Glyderau, Snowdonia



Bounce Below, Blaenau Ffestiniog



Harlech



Portmeirion



Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railway

Highlights

Here are just a few highlights, from north to south. For further information on things to do and where to stay go to www.visitsnowdonia.info

Start or Finish?

Aberdaron is located on Llŷn Peninsula's western extreme, the 'land's end' of North Wales. It's an atmospheric – and quite legendary – place. Discover the peninsula's unique history and culture at the **Porth y Swnt** visitor centre. And if the weather is kind, take a boat trip to **Bardsey**, the fabled 'Isle of 20,000 Saints'. Also worth mentioning is the abundance of coastal Walks along the Wales Coast Path.

World Heritage Sites

Historic legacy is everywhere to be seen. The iconic castles of **Caernarfon** and **Harlech**, all World Heritage Sites – dominate the scene. But the native fortresses of the Welsh Princes of Gwynedd have an equally compelling tale to tell. **Criccieth Castle** stands in a prime spot overlooking **Cardigan Bay** and you won't find a more atmospheric location than that of **Castell y Bere** near Tywyn, locked away in the foothills of Cader Idris.

Pick a beach

There are over 35 beaches in the region. Here's a quick run-down if you fancy a dip or a winter walk.

Aberdyfi – dramatically located at the mouth of the Dyfi Estuary, this big sandy beach is great for windsurfing and wildlife spotting

Harlech – untouched sandy beach, backed by dunes and theatrically overlooked by Harlech Castle

One of the world's best beach bars. The **Tŷ Coch Inn** came third in a global poll, ahead of bars in Australia, Florida and South Africa. It's a pebble's throw from the beach at the perfectly preserved National Trust coastal village of Porthdinllaen on the Llŷn Peninsula.

The adventure capital of the UK

Snowdonia Mountains and Coast is Britain's adrenaline and adventure capital. Where else can you whizz down a zip line at over 100mph, the fastest in the world, then bounce below in a giant subterranean trampoline, in a slate quarry, another world's first at **Blaenau Ffestiniog**.

Portmeirion

It's impossible not to fall in love with Portmeirion. This fantasy village, created by architect Sir Clough Williams-Ellis, is a wondrous mish-mash of influences that stretch from the Orient to Italy. Its lush grounds and gardens are almost as enchanting as the village itself.

Railways

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. For Britain's longest heritage railway ride hop on the 40 mile **Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railway** from Caernarfon to Blaenau Ffestiniog. Steam through the ancient woodlands and meadows in Southern Snowdonia on the **Talyllyn Railway**, the world's first preserved railway.

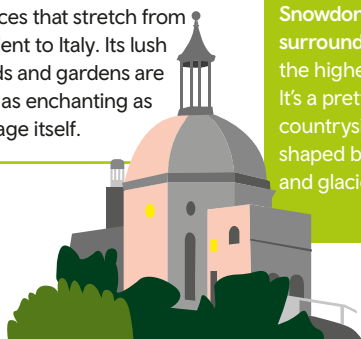


Go Igam Ogam (Just off the Coastal Way)

Caernarfon - Defined by its World Heritage castle, Caernarfon is a must-visit place.

Green Wood Forest Park is one very green family attraction, winner of many awards for its eco credentials.

Snowdon and the surrounding mountains - the highest peak in Wales. It's a pretty awesome slice of countryside, a craggy defile shaped by volcanoes and glaciers.





Aberystwyth





The Coastal Way in Ceredigion

Around 70 miles of the Coastal Way lies within Ceredigion stretching from the mouth of the Dyfi Estuary in the north to the historic market town of Cardigan in the south. It's a place of legendary landscapes and seascapes, colourful historic seafaring ports, long stretches of coastline designated a Special Area of Conservation and seafood direct from the bay. Head inland for quintessential Welsh countryside - traditional landscapes, hills and uplands, small market towns and lush green river valleys.

Highlights

This part of the route is studded with highlights. Here are just a few, from north to south. For further information on things to do and where to stay go to www.discoverceredigion.wales

Aberystwyth

The thriving capital of Mid Wales, is a multi-faceted seaside resort and university town, host to annual cycling and comedy festivals. **Ceredigion Museum**, housed in a splendiferous old music hall, gives you a rounded picture of life in this part of Wales, while Welsh culture and literature are the themes at the distinguished **National Library of Wales**. There's also a ruined castle, modern marina, and a cliff railway – so you'll have to come back to see it all.

Wildlife

For wildlife enthusiasts, the Ceredigion stretch of the Coastal Way is particularly inspiring with plenty of ways to get a closer look as you travel.

Visit the **Dyfi Osprey Project** to peek into the nests of these majestic 'sea eagles', brought back from the brink by careful conservation efforts. Nearby, is the wetland and woodland bird reserve of **RSPB Ynys-hir**.

The huge **Dyfi National Nature Reserve**, whose sand dunes and saltmarshes are internationally important wetlands, are best accessed from the visitor centre at **Ynyslas**. Explore the beach to find the remains of the sunken forest of 'Cantre'r Gwaelod' – the legendary Welsh Atlantis.

Take a wildlife boat trip into Europe's best dolphin-spotting waters from **New Quay** and spot porpoises, bottlenose dolphins and grey seals from the cliff top walk at **Aberporth**. Explore the marshland home of kingfishers and otters at the **Welsh Wildlife Centre** at Cilgerran near Cardigan. Look out for water buffalo too!

Ride the rails for waterfall walks in the Vale of Rheidol

Explore inland with a trip on the narrow-gauge **Vale of Rheidol Railway**. Starting in Aberystwyth, this historic steam railway climbs along a meandering river valley for 12 miles, revealing views at every turn on its journey to Devil's Bridge, where you'll discover a world of tumbling waterfalls hidden in a dramatic, steep-sided gorge, spanned by three bridges – one built by the Devil himself, so they say.

The jewel of Cardigan Bay

Considering the high standard of the competition, for **Mwnt** to attract this description must mean that it's an extraordinary place. Perhaps that's because there's really nothing here – apart, that is, from a starry beach scooped from green headlands and topped by a solitary little church, dazzling in its coat of whitewash. Just perfect.

Aberaeron

A handsome port lined with Regency-style houses decked out in all the colours of the rainbow. Tuck into a pint of prawns or some fresh Cardigan Bay crab at one of the town's bistro restaurants, then treat yourself to a scoop or two of Aberaeron's famous honey ice cream. The National Trust property of **Llanerchaeron** is a rare example of an 18th-century gentry estate. If you have time, you can get here by bike (or on foot) on a gentle three-mile cycleway along the banks of the River Aeron from Aberaeron.

Coastal walks

You can't visit our shore without taking a walk along the world famous 870 mile **Wales Coast Path**. Get a taste along a gentle stretch between the pretty harbour towns of **Aberaeron** and **New Quay** through wooded valleys and along clifftops with widescreen views of **Cardigan Bay**.

Cardigan

A lively market town where centuries of heritage sit alongside a cool, contemporary food and arts scene. It's hip and historic. A walk around the town takes in a time-travelling tapestry of architecture – from the sturdy ramparts of **Cardigan Castle**, past Georgian pubs and houses and on to the Victorian market hall.



Borth



Devil's Bridge



Aberaeron



New Quay



Mwnt



Cardigan



Go Igam Ogam (Just off the Coastal Way)

Bwlch Nant yr Arian – explore miles of mountain bike trails or get up close to red kites, the fork tailed birds of prey, as they come in to feed each afternoon at Bwlch Nant yr Arian.

Enjoy the tranquillity of **Strata Florida Abbey** whose ruins lie in the remote upland meadows of the Cambrian Mountains near Tregaron.



Fishguard





The Coastal Way in Pembrokeshire

Here we're featuring around 60 miles of the Coastal Way – the stretch between Poppit Sands near the historic market town of Cardigan and St Davids. It lies within the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, the UK's only totally coastal National Park. Every step of your journey will take you through a rich, diverse and timeless landscape – in Welsh 'Gwlad hud a lledrith', the fabled 'land of magic and enchantment' – that has inspired everyone from artists to Celtic saints, medieval pilgrims to today's travellers.



Newport



Ramsey Island

Ramsey Island ©Crown Copyright Visit Wales



Whitesands



Porthgain



St Davids



Blue Lagoon



St Dogmaels



Castell Henllys

Highlights



Here are a few highlights, from west to east. For further information on things to do and where to stay go to www.visitpembrokeshire.com

Ramsey Island

For really wild adventures, a visit to **RSPB Ramsey Island** is a must. Take a trip from St Davids to this nature reserve, home to teeming colonies of nesting seabirds, porpoises and breeding grey seals, for world-class wildlife spotting.

Smallest City in the UK

St Davids has cast a powerful spell for centuries – ever since medieval times, when two pilgrimages to its cathedral (the site founded by Wales's patron saint) were declared equivalent to one to Rome. It's Britain's smallest city (population 2,000) with, we reckon, the largest concentration of art galleries and studios per head.

Edible insects

Dr Beynon's Bug Farm, just outside St Davids, is a unique research and visitor centre dedicated to the insect world and sustainable agriculture. You really must visit the Grub Kitchen where insects are always on the menu.

Coasteering at the Blue Lagoon, Abereiddy

Get hands-on with our coastline as you clamber over boulders and rocky cliffs before splashing out on heart-pounding leaps into the waters of this former slate quarry turned aquatic adventure playground.

Award winning beaches

It can be safely said that the beaches of Pembrokeshire will tick everyone's boxes, and with over 50 to choose from you can see why. Protected by their **National Park status** Pembrokeshire's beaches have some of the cleanest waters with many awards to show for it.

Traditional harbour villages and towns

Porthgain, where the rugged, rock-bound north Pembrokeshire coast gives way momentarily to a sheltered harbour with a unique, oddball charm.

Fishguard's Lower Harbour is another textbook north Pembrokeshire location, working fishing boats mingle with paddle boarders in this pretty harbour that has also starred in classic Hollywood films such as *Moby Dick* and *Under Milkwood*.

Just along the coast is **Newport**, with a varied selection of restaurants, bistros and cafes. It's an ideal base for walking that attracts a fashionable crowd.

Quirky **Gwaun Valley** was carved out during the last Ice Age. This steep-sided vale runs from the coast up towards the Preseli Hills, where the National Park ventures inland and is dotted with compelling prehistoric sites including the origin of the Stonehenge Bluestones.

North Pembrokeshire finishes with a flourish along the Teifi Estuary and **Poppit Sands**, a big, breezy beach close to another saintly spot, the historic village of **St Dogmaels** with its medieval abbey.

Poppit Sands marks the start (or finish, depending on your direction of travel) of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park. It's a long, sandy, dune-backed beach at the mouth of the River Teifi.

Go Igam ogam (just off the Coastal Way)

Pentre Ifan – a Neolithic burial chamber dating back to around 3500BC in the hills to the east of Newport. It's the largest and best example of its kind in Wales.




Castell Henllys – a reconstructed Iron Age village that will whisk you back in time almost 2000 years.

Nevern Church – Celtic Ogham script from the 6th century can be found etched into a window sill inside the church. You must also find the 700 year old Bleeding Yew near the main gate, for some unknown reason the tree has been 'bleeding' blood red sap for as long as anyone can remember.



The Wales Way

The Wales Way is a new family of three national routes that lead you into the heart of real Wales. The Coastal Way travels the west coast of Wales around Cardigan Bay, a 180-mile (290km) road-trip between the sea and mountains. The Cambrian Way crosses the spine of Wales for 185 miles (300km) between Llandudno and Cardiff, through National Parks and big green spaces. The North Wales Way leads 75 miles (120km) past mighty castles into the island of Anglesey.

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

