

North Wales



Feeling vast despite its relatively small area, North Wales really packs it in. From rugged mountain trails and scenic coastal paths to seaside resorts and medieval castles, the region has a particularly wide range of attractions. The North attracts more than its fair share of outdoor-activity enthusiasts, from climbers to kayakers. Here, too, are plenty of attractions for families and couples in search of a secret-hideaway bolt-hole with a touch of class. The north coast and borderlands make for an impressive introduction to Wales. The main centres here are Llandudno, a classic British seaside resort of Victorian splendour, and bustling Llangollen, with its International Eisteddfod, adrenalin-charged thrills and burgeoning cultural scene. The region's mountainous heartland is dominated by the Snowdonia National Park, where the highest peaks in Wales and England scrape moody, often overcast, skies. But don't worry about the weather. With a slew of smart places opening up, there's a hot bath, a warm bed and a hearty dinner awaiting every walker or climber upon their return.

Architecture fans will be mesmerised by Portmeirion, an Italianate village in a romantic seaside setting, and one of the must-see destinations. A chain of historic castles spans the North with Caernarfon and Conwy elegiac reminders of the halcyon days of their respective home towns. Heading west, the roads are quieter, the views more sweeping and the sense of Welsh culture increasingly strong. The Llŷn Peninsula, wild, rocky and less frequented than other areas of North Wales, will forever be associated with its ancient pilgrimage to Bardsey Island, while the Isle of Anglesey has a greater concentration of prehistoric sites than anywhere else in Wales, and superlative coastal walking.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Savouring seaside favourites both old and new in the genteel Victorian resort of **Llandudno** (p747)
- Declaring 'I am not a number, I'm a free man' among the fairy-tale nooks and crannies of **Portmeirion** (p767) village
- Following in the footsteps of 20,000 saints on a pilgrimage to **Bardsey Island** (p770)
- Discovering family activities, great coastal walking and fine foodie hideaways on the **Isle of Anglesey** (p772)
- Getting active, then spoiling yourself rotten, amid the high peaks and chic retreats of **Snowdonia National Park** (p756)
- Combining high Welsh culture with action-packed adventures around **Llangollen** (p753)



- POPULATION: 615,500
- AREA: 2382 SQ MILES
- AN EARTHQUAKE MEASURING 5.4 ON THE RICHTER SCALE OCCURRED ON 19 JULY 1984 ON THE LLŷN PENINSULA

