



Brecon Beacons & Southeast Wales

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Walnut Tree (p86)
- ➔ Hardwick (p86)
- ➔ Old Black Lion (p92)
- ➔ Felin Fach Griffin (p102)
- ➔ Nantyffin Cider Mill (p94)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Llanddeusant Youth Hostel (p104)
- ➔ Bear (p91)
- ➔ Start (p91)
- ➔ Bell at Skenfrith (p81)
- ➔ Cantre Selyf (p99)

Why Go?

Wales' southeast corner, where the River Wye meanders along the border with England, is the birthplace of British tourism. For over 200 years travellers have visited this tranquil waterway and its winding, wooded vale, where the ruins of Tintern Abbey inspired poets and artists such as Wordsworth and Turner. But there's more to the region than the market towns and rural byways of the Lower Wye. To the west, the dramatically serried South Wales valleys tell the story of the industrial revolution through heritage sites and still close-knit communities. Move north and the landscape opens out to the magnificent upland scenery of Brecon Beacons National Park, where high mountain roads dip down to remote hamlets and whitewashed ancient churches. The hiking and mountain-biking terrain here is superb.

When to Go

Outdoor types should head for the Brecon Beacons in late spring or early autumn in what should be reasonable weather (though there's no guarantee); the narrow country roads may be impassable in winter, and become congested during school summer holidays. And note that many hostels and campgrounds don't open till after Easter.

The literary extravaganza of the Hay Festival occurs in May, the world-famous Brecon Jazz Festival is in August, while foodies should focus a trip around Abergavenny's food festival in September.



Brecon Beacons & Southeast Wales Highlights

- 1 Gaze up at **Carreg Cennen** (p103), Wales' most dramatically positioned fortress
- 2 Stretch your legs to the max by climbing the region's

highest mountain, **Pen-y-Fan** (p86)

- 3 Wander the elegant streets of **Hay-on-Wye** (p89), discovering your literary side at the umpteen bookshops

- 4 Grit your teeth for a spectacular drive through the chapel-dotted **Vale of Ewys** (p88)