



Wales



THIS EDITION WRITTEN AND RESEARCHED BY

Peter Dragicevich
Hugh McNaughtan

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CARDIFF MARKET P68



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Plan Your Trip

Itineraries



3
WEEKS

Full Welsh Circuit

This itinerary has been designed for travellers who have the time and inclination to pack as much of Wales as possible into one big loop.

Start at **Cardiff** and head north to see the fairy-tale castle at **Caerphilly**, before cutting west to **Swansea**. Head out along the Gower Peninsula to spectacular **Rhossili Bay**, and then continue north to remote **Carreg Cennen** in Brecon Beacons National Park. Base yourself in **Llandeilo** for a day of gardens and manor houses.

Head west to the seaside resort town of **Tenby**, within Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, before continuing on to the ancient city of **St Davids**. Head up the coast to **Newport** for a day at the beach and a night of good food. Stop at Pentre Ifan and Castell Henllys on the long, leisurely drive up the coast to studenty **Aberystwyth**.

Continue on through ecofriendly **Machynlleth** and historic **Dolgellau** to **Harlech** and its World Heritage castle. Spend half a day exploring the surreal Italianate village of **Portmeirion** before continuing on to nearby **Porthmadog**. From here you can take a steam train ride on the





Caernarfon Castle (p268)

narrow-gauge Ffestiniog Railway to **Blaenau Ffestiniog** and stop to tour the slate caverns. Head along the Llŷn Peninsula to **Aberdaron** for surf-battered views over Bardsey Island from Braich-y-Pwll.

Follow the coast to **Caernarfon**, and then continue on to **Llanberis**, where you can visit the National Slate Museum and base yourself to tackle Snowdon. Double back to the Menai Strait and cross over to Anglesey to visit **Beaumaris**, **Rhosneigr** and **Plas Newydd**.

Proceed along the north coast to walled **Conwy** and beachy **Llandudno** before

turning south to forest-dwelling **Betws-y-Coed**. Head to genteel **Llangollen**, stop at fascinating Powis Castle in **Welshpool**, then continue down through Powys to kooky **Llanwrtyd Wells** and on to the market town of **Llandovery**. Head east to **Brecon**, which is a good base for tackling Pen-y-Fan, and then pop up to famously book-obsessed **Hay-on-Wye**. Cut down through **Crickhowell** to food-focused **Abergavenny**. Visit **Blaenavon**, then skirt Monmouth and follow the peaceful Wye Valley to **Tintern Abbey** and on to the border town of **Chepstow**.



2
WEEKS

The Best Bits

This short itinerary covers the very best of what Wales has to offer at a breakneck pace. It includes the two major cities, all three of the national parks and some of the best small towns, beaches, mountains and castles.

Start in **Hay-on-Wye**, a pretty little town with a book fetish, and then cut through Brecon Beacons National Park to the pretty village of **Crickhowell** and the neighbouring market town of **Abergavenny**.

The following day head east to Monmouth and trace the Wye Valley down past Tintern Abbey to castle-dominated **Chepstow**, then continue on to **Cardiff**.

Base yourself in the Welsh capital for a couple of days before blasting along the M4 motorway to **Swansea**. Use Wales' second city as a base to explore the Gower Peninsula.

Take a detour to visit the remote ruins of **Carreg Cennen** before continuing on to **Tenby** and **St Davids**.

Continue up the coast to **Aberystwyth** and then inland to **Machynlleth**. Head through the heart of Snowdonia National Park to Dolgellau and onto **Llanberis** to get better acquainted with Snowdon, Wales' highest peak.

Explore the castle towns of **Caernarfon** and **Conwy** before washing up on the Victorian seaside promenade of **Llandudno**.



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Top: Rhossili Bay (p133)

Bottom: Mad Hatter statue, Llandudno (p281)

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DAYS

South Wales Circuit

Taking in the capital, two national parks, numerous castles, many beautiful beaches, industrial sites, and cities associated with Dylan Thomas, St David and Merlin the Magician, this South Welsh circuit ticks off many of the icons of Wales. Make sure you allow time for coastal walks and lazy beach days on the Gower Peninsula and Pembrokeshire (weather dependent, of course), as well as hiking in the Brecon Beacons.

Start by thoroughly exploring **Cardiff** and its surrounds before heading west to **Swansea** for a Dylan Thomas fix. Spend a day on the beach-lined **Gower Peninsula** before proceeding to ancient **Cardiff**, Merlin's town. Settle in to the seaside vibe at candy-striped **Tenby**, Wales' most appealing resort town and the gateway to Pembrokeshire Coast National Park. Check out the mighty castle at **Pembroke** and head on through **Haverfordwest** and the pretty port of **Solva** to beguiling **St Davids**, a sweet little city in a magical setting. Visit **Fishguard** on your way to food- and beach-loving **Newport**, where neolithic and Iron Age sites await discovery in the surrounding hills.

From **Cardigan**, follow the lush Teifi Valley along the border of Ceredigion, stopping at the cute village of Cenarth and the National Woolen Museum. The Cambrian Mountains stand between here and lovely **Llandeilo**, so cut south towards Carmarthen before heading east. Do your homework first, as there are gardens, manor houses and castles to explore in this part of the Carmarthenshire countryside. Head on to the market town of **Llandovery**, with its fine Georgian buildings, and then skirt the northern edge of Brecon Beacons National Park on your way to **Brecon**. The Beacons spread south from here, offering ample opportunities for walking, horse riding and canal trips. Peaceful **Crickhowell** is another good walking base. Cross the River Usk and cut down towards **Blaenavon**, a small town that wears the legacy of its coal-mining and iron-smelting history on its sleeve, and has been inscribed on the World Heritage list as a result. Backtrack towards **Abergavenny**, home to some of Wales' best country restaurants and gastro-pubs. Finish with a saunter down the Wye Valley, past romantic Tintern Abbey, to **Chepstow**.

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Top: Tenby (p152)
Bottom: Fine dining in Abergavenny (p91)





10
DAYS

North & Mid-Wales

The scenic highlights of North and Mid-Wales include river valleys, spectacular mountains and a widely varied coastline. This itinerary cuts a broad arc through the Welsh-speaking heartland, taking in still more castles, industrial sites and beaches – these things are Welsh clichés for a reason.

Start in historic **Ruthin** and take the beautiful back road that cuts through the bottom of the Clwydian Range to **Llangollen**, a small riverside town famous for outdoor pursuits and its World Heritage-listed canal and aqueduct. From here head west on the A5, swapping Denbighshire for the eastern reaches of Snowdonia National Park. **Betws-y-Coed** makes a pretty base for forest and river walks, and mountain biking.

Put Snowdonia behind you for a few days as you head north on the A470, shadowing the River Conwy. Stop along the way at Bodnant Estate before heading north to the old-fashioned beach resort town of **Llandudno**. Hop down to **Conwy** to immerse yourself in the medieval world between its town walls and tick off castle number one of the ‘Castles of Edward I in Gwynedd’ World Heritage Site. The A55 hugs the coast as it heads southwest towards **Bangor**. Stop for a quick look at the pier and the cathedral before crossing the Menai Strait to the Isle of Anglesey. Base yourself at **Beaumaris** (where you’ll find castle number two) and circle the sacred island of the druids.

Cross the Menai Strait again and head to **Llanberis**, where you can plan your assault on Snowdon, either on foot or by train. Circle the mighty mountain, stopping at **Beddgelert**, before heading back to the coast at **Caernarfon** for castle number three. Circle the remote Llŷn Peninsula, stopping at the beaches and pubs of **Aberdaron** and **Abersoch**. Continue through **Porthmadog**, **Harlech** (castle number four) and beachy **Barmouth** before following the Mawddach Estuary to stony faced, heritage-filled **Dolgellau**. Head south to visit the greenies at **Machynlleth** before rejoining the coast at the buzzy student town of **Aberystwyth**. Stop at the **Devil’s Bridge** waterfalls and the gallery at **Newtown**, before finishing at **Welshpool** with a visit to sumptuous Powis Castle.



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Top: Beach at Barmouth (p237)
Bottom: Pontcysyllte Aqueduct (p224), Llangollen

Map Legend

Sights

- Beach
- Bird Sanctuary
- Buddhist
- Castle/Palace
- Christian
- Confucian
- Hindu
- Islamic
- Jain
- Jewish
- Monument
- Museum/Gallery/Historic Building
- Ruin
- Shinto
- Sikh
- Taoist
- Winery/Vineyard
- Zoo/Wildlife Sanctuary
- Other Sight

Activities, Courses & Tours

- Bodysurfing
- Diving
- Canoeing/Kayaking
- Course/Tour
- Sento Hot Baths/Onsen
- Skiing
- Snorkelling
- Surfing
- Swimming/Pool
- Walking
- Windsurfing
- Other Activity

Sleeping

- Sleeping
- Camping

Eating

- Eating

Drinking & Nightlife

- Drinking & Nightlife
- Cafe

Entertainment

- Entertainment

Shopping

- Shopping

Information

- Bank
- Embassy/Consulate
- Hospital/Medical
- Internet
- Police
- Post Office
- Telephone
- Toilet
- Tourist Information
- Other Information

Geographic

- Beach
- Gate
- Hut/Shelter
- Lighthouse
- Lookout
- Mountain/Volcano
- Oasis
- Park
- Pass
- Picnic Area
- Waterfall

Population

- Capital (National)
- Capital (State/Province)
- City/Large Town
- Town/Village

Transport

- Airport
- Border crossing
- Bus
- Cable car/Funicular
- Cycling
- Ferry
- Metro station
- Monorail
- Parking
- Petrol station
- S-Bahn/Subway station
- Taxi
- T-bane/Tunnelbana station
- Train station/Railway
- Tram
- Tube station
- U-Bahn/Underground station
- Other Transport

Routes

- Tollway
- Freeway
- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary
- Lane
- Unsealed road
- Road under construction
- Plaza/Mall
- Steps
- Tunnel
- Pedestrian overpass
- Walking Tour
- Walking Tour detour
- Path/Walking Trail

Boundaries

- International
- State/Province
- Disputed
- Regional/Suburb
- Marine Park
- Cliff
- Wall

Hydrography

- River, Creek
- Intermittent River
- Canal
- Water
- Dry/Salt/Intermittent Lake
- Reef

Areas

- Airport/Runway
- Beach/Desert
- Cemetery (Christian)
- Cemetery (Other)
- Glacier
- Mudflat
- Park/Forest
- Sight (Building)
- Sportsground
- Swamp/Mangrove

Note: Not all symbols displayed above appear on the maps in this book



OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Franklin, London, Melbourne, Oakland, Dublin, Beijing and Delhi, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

OUR WRITERS



Peter Dragicevich

Cardiff; Brecon Beacons & Southeast Wales; Swansea, the Gower & Carmarthenshire; St Davids & Pembrokeshire; Plan Your Trip; Understand Wales; Survival Guide After a successful career in niche newspaper and magazine publishing, both in his native New Zealand and in Australia, Peter finally gave into Kiwi wanderlust, giving up staff jobs to chase his diverse roots around much of Europe. Over the last decade he's written literally dozens of guidebooks for

Lonely Planet on an oddly disparate collection of countries, all of which he's come to love. He once again calls Auckland, New Zealand his home – although his current nomadic existence means he's hardly ever there.



Hugh McNaughtan

Aberystwyth & mid-Wales; Snowdonia & the Llŷn; Anglesey & the North Coast A former English lecturer, Hugh swapped grant applications for visa applications, and turned his love of travel into a full-time thing. A long-time castle tragic with an abiding love of Britain's Celtic extremities, he jumped at the chance to explore Wales, from the Cambrian Mountains to the tip of Anglesey. He's never happier than when he's on the road with his two daughters. Except

perhaps on the cricket field...

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