



Snowdonia & the Llŷn

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Best Places to Eat

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Best Places to Sleep

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Why Go?

This part of Wales really packs it in, from rugged mountain trails to coastal paths, old industrial sites and heritage train lines. The gem in this diadem is Snowdonia National Park, where the mightiest peaks south of Scotland scrape glowering skies. With such a formidable mountain shield, it's little wonder that the northwestern county of Gwynedd has held tightly to Cymraeg language and culture. More than 65% speak the ancient mother tongue here – the highest proportion in the country.

Along with the mountains there's the sea – battering the rocks at Braich-y-Pwll, producing surfer-friendly swells at Porth Neigwl and cooling the bathers at Barmouth. And all those bracing sea breezes seem to have blown much of the stuffiness or British reserve from the local populace. In many ways, this slice of the country distils the very essence of Welshness – just don't mention that to the folks in Cardiff!

When to Go

- ➔ April to July are the driest months, while July and August are the warmest. The best months to hit the mountains are June and July for their combination of higher temperatures and lower wind and rain.
- ➔ In June the Three Peaks Yacht Race hits Barmouth, while the hardcore put on their fell-running shoes for the Snowdon Race in July, the same month Llangollen holds its International Musical Eisteddfod and Fringe Festival.
- ➔ September is the big month for events, with Bala's triathlon, Barmouth's arts and walking festivals and Portmeirion's wonderful Festival No 6. Snow starts to fall in the mountains in October and lingers on the paths until May.



Snowdonia & the Llŷn Highlights

- 1 Cader Idris** (p235)
Climbing Snowdonia's second-most-famous peak, a legendary haunt of giants.
- 2 Pontcysyllte Aqueduct** (p224)
Floating through the

air across this pinnacle of Georgian civil engineering.

- 3 Blaenau Ffestiniog** (p240)
Testing your claustrophobia in gloomy slate caverns.

- 4 Welsh Highland Railway** (p255)
Taking a coast-to-coast journey on a narrow-gauge railway.
- 5 Braich-y-Pwll** (p261)
Gazing towards a magical