



ADVENTURES
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HIKING WALES

Trip Summary

HIGHLIGHTS

- Hiking in Wales three National Parks: Brecon Beacons, Pembrokeshire, and Snowdon
- Going to the top of Mount Snowdon by historic train.
- Visiting some of Wales' famous historical castles, churches, and ruins
- Learning about Welsh culture and its tumultuous history

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TRIP AT A GLANCE

- Location:** Cardiff, Wales
- Activities:** Hiking
- Arrive:** Arrive at our hotel in Cardiff by 4 p.m. on Day 1
- Depart:** We'll have you to the Bangor train station by 9:30 a.m. or the Manchester airport by 11:30 p.m. on Day 11, the last day of the trip

Trip Overview

Discover the essence of Wales on our hiking trip to all three of Wales' National Parks. Although a small country, it is second to none in its fascinating history, varied and stunning topography, and a warm and welcoming tradition of hospitality, and our hiking trip is a perfect mixture of hiking in stunning landscapes, interwoven with cultural encounters and experiences. We begin our adventure in the vibrant capital city of Cardiff before heading off to the wild windswept escarpments of the Brecon Beacons National Park. Then it's on to the coast of Pembrokeshire, widely regarded as the spiritual heartland of Wales. Finally we head North to the rugged mountains of Snowdonia, a stronghold of Welsh culture. Castles and fortresses dot the landscape, a reflection of its turbulent history. And while a part of Great Britain, Welsh culture has survived largely intact, as demonstrated by the bilingualism we'll find everywhere. Croeso I Gymru!

Rating

This trip is for women who have some experience hiking and want to combine hiking with immersion in the history and culture of the area. We spend 3-6 hours hiking on most days at elevations ranging from sea level to 3560' (Mt. Snowdon is the highest elevation, ascent is by historic train). Hiking in Wales is quite varied from good mountain footpaths to uneven ground. **Rating:** 1 2 **3** 4 5. A rating of 3 requires aerobic conditioning for a minimum of 30 - 45 minutes 3 to 4 days a week.

What's Included

- A local Welsh guide and an AGC guide (depending on group size, there may not be an AGC guide)
- Ten nights double occupancy lodging
- All meals from Dinner on Day 1 to Breakfast on the final day, except when otherwise noted on the itinerary
- Ground transportation in Wales, including airport transfer on the final day
- All activities noted on the itinerary

Not included: Travel to and from Wales, transportation to the hotel on Day 1, one lunch and dinner, alcoholic beverages, guide gratuities, optional activities, and travel insurance.

OUR ITINERARY

Below is the itinerary we have planned for the trip. As is true on any adventure travel trip, plans for any specific day may be modified due to weather considerations, unforeseen circumstances, new opportunities, and group interests.

DAY 1

Arrive Cardiff any time before 4 p.m. today. We'll gather at our hotel at 4:30 p.m. for welcome and introductions, followed by a trip orientation. Our Welsh guide will then take us on a brief walking tour of Cardiff on our way to dinner. Those of us who just arrived will undoubtedly be jetlagged, so we'll make sure we get to bed early. Overnight: Cardiff.

DAY 2

From Cardiff, we will drive for about an hour through the South Wales Valleys. This area once fueled the Industrial Revolution with her coal, leaving behind only scars in the mountainside and the faded glory of the architecture to remind us. Leaving the coal valleys behind, we enter Brecon Beacons National Park, the first of 3 National Park on our adventure. Our first walk will be along the tranquil Brecon and Monmouthshire canal. In the past, horses pulled the barges and we will follow their trail along the ancient towpath. By its very nature this is level walking and a superb walk for our first day. The pace is slow, allowing us to ease into the rhythms of rural Wales and enjoy our first lunch in a cozy pub.

Hiking: 5 miles. Elevation gain: 120 feet. Overnight: The Old Rectory Hotel, Llangattock (2 nights) or similar.

DAY 3

Now that we've recovered from jet lag, we're ready for some more serious hiking. After picking up a picnic lunch from the local bakery, we set off from our hotel along the Offa's Dyke footpath. This is one of Wales' National trails. Offa was a 9th century Saxon king who built a stone and earth barrier to delineate his kingdom from that of the troublesome Celts in the west. Our walk will take us from the lush Wye valley up onto the wild and windswept tops of the Black mountains, where we climb to the top of Hay Bluff (2,220 feet). This is border country; the views here stretch out over and beyond Wales, to the English counties of Herford and Gloucestershire. Our bus will pick us up at Gospel pass and drive us down to the romantic ruins of LLanAnthony Abbey. Rebuilt in the 13th century, what stands today are the picturesque remains.

Hiking: 5 miles. Elevation gain: 2,000 feet. Overnight: The Old Rectory Hotel, Llangattock (2 nights) or similar.

DAY 4

Our scenic drive will take us over the north side of the Brecon Beacons National Park, west toward Pembrokeshire. We will stop briefly in the ancient and old-fashioned Drover town of Landovery, home to a memorial to the Welsh drovers. Our hike today is an undulating circuit following footpaths around and up to Carreg Cennen Castle, a striking 12th century fortress that changed hands many times between the English and Welsh and is arguably the most romantic castle in Wales. Whether or not you agree, a visit to this dramatic fortress is a must and the climb up to it is well worth it.

Finishing our hike, we continue the last leg of our journey to the brightly colored seaside town of Tenby and our beautifully located family-run hotel, an older but classic 'by the seaside' lodging with that great historic Wales atmosphere. Following dinner at the hotel, we'll complete our day with a twilight walk with resident storyteller, Marion Davies.

Hiking: 5.5 miles. Elevation gain: 1,000 feet. Overnight: The Gower Hotel, Saundersfoot (3 nights) or similar.

DAY 5

National Geographic magazine called Pembrokeshire the world's second-best coastal destination. We'll hike today on the All Wales Coast Path, with spectacular cliff top views. We'll keep our eyes open for gannets fishing and playful choughs catching the updrafts. Barafundle Bay is surely one of the loveliest beaches in the world and an inviting place for a swim. You might think coastal paths are flat and easy hiking, but you would be wrong, and a break at the Boat House tearoom at Stack pole quay to sample the local wares will be most welcome.

We then continue onwards to the freshwater Bosherton Lakes, famous for their lilies and resident otters. This landscape, designed by the Cawdor family as a setting for their country house, is a lovely contrast to the dramatic clifftops. Today the main house is gone, but the estate is an internationally important nature reserve and a listed designed landscape. Our coach will then take us back to Tenby for dinner.

Hiking: 8 - 10 miles. Overnight: The Gower Hotel, Saundersfoot (3 nights) or similar.

DAY 6

Today we are heading to the spiritual center of Wales and the birthplace of its patron saint, Saint David. According to tradition, David was born in a lightning storm on the headland, less than a mile away from where the village's cathedral stands today. Tucked away on a river and out of sight from marauding Vikings, the cathedral became one of the most important shrines of medieval Christendom, when two pilgrimages to Saint David's was equal to one to Rome. Inside we will see Saint David's shrine, as well as the sarcophagus of Edmund Tudor, Henry VII's father. After lunch on your own with some time to explore the village, in the afternoon we'll walk another section of the Wales Coast Path. We'll go from Saint David's to Saint Non's Bay, where David was born, and then to Porthclais before returning to Saint David on another path. Before driving back to Tenby, we might call in at Solva Woollen Mill, Pembrokeshire's oldest working woolen mill.

Overnight: The Gower Hotel, Saundersfoot (3 nights) or similar.

DAY 7

We get an early start today as we bid farewell to Tenby and head towards North Wales. This will be our longest drive (about 5 - 6 hours of driving) and we'll break our journey along the way. Although farmers are notoriously difficult to pin down in advance, our plan is to stretch our legs with a visit to a farm and a chance to watch sheepdogs work. We'll then continue to Snowdonia National Park. This was Wales' first National Park and home to its highest mountain and largest lake. Its rugged landscape is a complete contrast with everything we've seen previously.
Overnight: Royal Oak Hotel, Betws-y-Coed (4 nights), or similar.

DAY 8

The village of Beddgelert is blessed: it lies on the confluence of two mountain rivers and is surrounded by wooded hills in the heart of the Snowdonia National Park. The quarrymen's cottages that make up the village are prettily decorated with window boxes, and the village often wins prizes for its joyful floral displays. We set off on the banks of the river Glaslyn. Our first stop is at 'Gelert's Grave'. Gelert was a brave legendary dog, from which the village takes its name. Wales is a land of myth and legend, and there are still a few to tell today.
The river gathers speed as it narrows into a gorge, and we will negotiate the fisherman's path. We will soon turn up into a secret valley, with contrasting landscape. The mountain views will be amazing today (weather permitting): Cnicht (The Welsh Matterhorn), Snowdon, and Dinas Emrys, where legend has it the Welsh Red Dragon fought the English White Dragon and reigned supreme. Dinner is on your own tonight, so you'll have time to explore the town.
Overnight: Royal Oak Hotel, Betws-y-Coed (4 nights), or similar.

DAY 9

In just a fifteen-minute drive to Llanberis we are at the foot of Snowdon. Snowdon, or Yr Wyddfa in Welsh, is the highest mountain south of the Scottish Highlands. At 3,560 feet, it is not high in terms of mountains of the world, but it is still one cracker of a mountain. Shaped by glaciers, this majestic mountain is reminiscent of a starfish from above, with magnificent ridges radiating from the central pyramidal peak. We have several choices today: you may choose to ride up and back to the summit on the historic Snowdon mountain railway; ride up and then walk back down; or, if you're looking for a challenge, hike to the summit and back. In addition to your energy level, the weather is also an important factor. Whatever option you decide on, we will all undoubtedly have earned a pint-sized mug of tea at the famous climber's cafe, Pete's Eats. Or perhaps a pint of something stronger at The Heights pub!
Hiking: 4.5 miles up and 4.5 miles down. Elevation gain and loss: 3,024 feet. Overnight: Royal Oak Hotel, Betws-y-Coed (4 nights), or similar.

DAY 10

After our hearty Scottish breakfast, we drive to the magnificent seaside town of Conwy, known for its UNESCO designated medieval castles and churches and particularly for Conwy Castle. We'll have a guided tour of it, and then head to the village of LLanafairfechan for the start of our hike. On our hike we will stop for lunch at the mountain farm of Rhian Jones, known for her artistic Blacksmith work. As well as stunning coastal scenery and perhaps even views of the Isle of Man on a clear day, this upland hike over heathery moorlands offers up a wealth of archaeology, from stone circles to Iron Age forts. Hiking 10 miles, 960 feet elevation gain
Tonight we share one final farewell dinner at the charming Royal Welsh Yacht Club, in the heart of Caernarfon. It's a fitting end to our time in this most amazing country.
Overnight: Royal Oak Hotel, Betws-y-Coed (4 nights), or similar.

DAY 11

After breakfast, it's unfortunately time to leave. We'll arrive first at the Bangor railway station at 9:30 a.m. and then continue on to Manchester airport, arriving approximately 11:30 a.m. for flights or connections to other trains. Hwyl fawr!

ADDITIONAL TRIP INFORMATION

Getting There

Our trip starts in Cardiff, Wales. You can either fly directly to Cardiff (CWL) or to one of the London airports and then take the train to Cardiff. Detailed information on how to make those connections will be included in the PreDeparture Document, sent 5 months before the trip.

If you would like assistance with airfare, we recommend contacting our AirDesk Partner, [Exitto Travel](#). Start by submitting this [form](#). Just fill in your dates and destinations, including any additional notes about preferred carriers, class of service, possible stopovers, etc., and an agent will typically respond via email within a few hours. If you prefer to call, the number is 800-655-4053; be sure to tell them you are traveling with Adventures in Good Company.

Please note: Exitto charges a one-time, non-refundable processing fees of \$35 per passenger.

Accommodations

We'll be staying in locally owned inns and lodges, in double occupancy rooms with en suite bathrooms. Please note: Not all lodgings have elevators (lifts). It is essential that you following the packing list closely, pack light and be able to handle your own luggage, including carrying up multiple stairs.

Travel Insurance

We recommend that you purchase a travel protection plan to help protect you and your travel investment against the unexpected. For your convenience, we offer travel protection through Travelex Insurance Services. For more information on the available plans or to enroll, visit www.travelexinsurance.com or call 1-800-228-9792 and reference location number 06-0331.

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