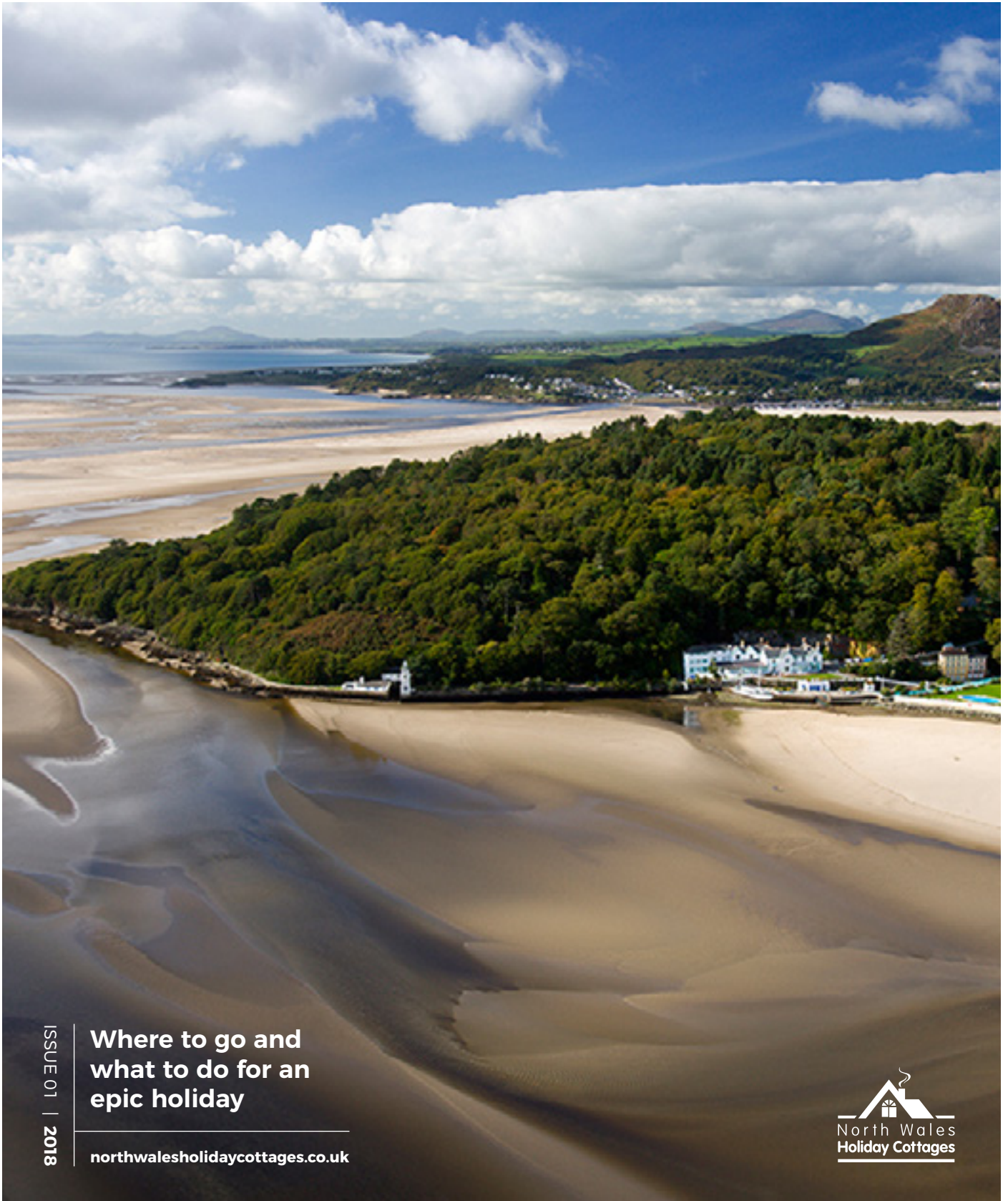


THE NORTH WALES GUIDE



ISSUE 01 | 2018

**Where to go and
what to do for an
epic holiday**

northwalesholidaycottages.co.uk


North Wales
Holiday Cottages

Introduction





Throughout the guide you'll find lots of insights and recommendations from the people who know it best, the North Wales Holiday Cottages team. We hope they will make your stay that little bit more special.

Whatever your passion, the guide will give you loads of inspiration for things to see and do during your stay. You can dip in and out based on your interests, what you'd like to do or even when you'll be visiting.

Taste for culture? On page 35, you'll find an events directory that will help you plan your stay around a major event or festival (be warned, there are lots to choose from).

Passion for history? With a treasure trove of legendary landmarks to explore, we share with you the unmissable places, people and events that have shaped our history.

Love food? We do too! Having done the hard work and eaten at many of them ourselves, we've shared our pick of best places to eat and drink in a comprehensive guide, starting on page 30.

Searching for adventure? On two feet or two wheels, up high or way down low, we're not the adventure capital of Wales for nothing, as you'll find out!

Won't go away without your four-legged friend? Us neither. That's why you'll see the 🐾 icon on dog friendly beaches, restaurants, cafes and pubs.

ABOUT NORTH WALES HOLIDAY COTTAGES

For more than fifty years, North Wales Holiday Cottages has been creating memorable stays for scores of holidaymakers. The company started out with a handful of farming properties and has grown into one of the largest rental companies in the region.

Now boasting a portfolio of over 150 Visit Wales inspected holiday properties, guests can browse a wide range of properties on our website to find the one perfectly suited to their stay.

With everything from idyllic rural cottages to contemporary apartments loaded with all the mod-cons - many with virtual tours so guests can really get a feel for the place - North Wales Holiday Cottages has properties in all the most popular resorts in North Wales, plus some hidden gems too.





NORTH WALES PATH

Holyhead

ANGLESEY

Beaumaris

Llandudno

CONWY CASTLE

Conwy

Colwyn Bay

Rhyl

TALACRE

Prestatyn

Bangor

NORTH WALES

Denbigh

NEWBOROUGH

Caernarfon

RIBRIDES

SNOWDONIA

Betws-y-Coed

ZIP WORLD

CYCLING IN HIRAETHOG

Ruthin

PONTCYSYLTE AQUEDUCT

Wrexham

Blaenau Ffestiniog

PORTMEIRION

Pwllheli

Bala

Llangollen

LLANGOLLEN RAILWAY

LLANBEDROG

Harlech

COED Y BRENIN

Aberdaron

Dolgellau

Barmouth

RHAEADR WATERFALLS

SURFING

Welshpool

Adventure activities



Over the last few years North Wales has established itself as the adventure capital of the UK - home to some of the country's most amazing, terrifying and unique adventure experiences.

Heralded by travel companies as the 'next big thing' and travel bloggers as 'the place to be', North Wales has transformed itself from a sleepy backwater into a raging torrent.

But adventure comes in many guises in North Wales. From popular watersports to underground abseiling, walking mountain ridges to riding woodland rollercoasters.

Do it all here and more besides. So enough of the sales pitch...here's our guide to the best fun you've had in ages!



PIPE DREAMS

Surf. Snowdonia. Two words that shouldn't belong together. But deep in the Conwy Valley, they do.

Shimmy into that wetsuit, grab a board and surf the waves - perfect waves, no less, powered by pioneering technology.

Okay, so this is not the sea - there isn't the anticipation and the unexpected element here - but we think that's part of **Surf Snowdonia's** appeal. You don't have to be a proficient surfer to have a great adventure here. It's the perfect venue to learn surfing or to try out if you've ever fancied jumping 'onboard'.

Experienced riders will love it for the opportunity to hone their skills in a stable but challenging environment. Unlike real conditions, it's not weather dependent, and with 18 waves an hour, you're not bobbing around waiting for the next ride either.

If surfing isn't your thing you can go mad in the Splash & Crash lagoon, a watery assault course that will remind you of a certain game show presented by Richard Hammond. All sounding too much? Just find a table in the panoramic restaurant and enjoy the action.



IS IT A BIRD? IS IT A PLANE?

Fancy exceeding the National Speed Limit on a zip wire suspended above a Welsh quarry?

We don't know what possessed us but that's exactly what we did when we visited **ZipWorld** in Bethesda recently.

The aptly-named Velocity is Europe's longest and the world's fastest zipwire - on a good day people have been known to hit 100mph! Another world-class adventure experience unique to North Wales, it's reserved for thrillseekers only but we couldn't recommend it enough.

After a safety debrief and test flight on the 'baby zipper', you'll make the long journey up the mountain by truck - by this point the adrenalin is really pumping. Securely cocooned in a tethered

harness, you're launched off a vertical drop and fly over Penrhyn Quarry's dizzying chasm - Superman style. Within seconds you'll be zooming along at high speed - open your eyes or you'll miss it!

ZipWorld is now more than one attraction. You can rollercoaster through woods near Betws-y-Coed, bounce around trampolines in the slate caverns below Blaenau Ffestiniog, or fly in groups of four along ziplines above ground. Did we mention that ZipWorld started life as a high ropes course? You can do that too.

If you're not an adrenalin junkie, don't let that put you off. Watching the brave (or should we say foolhardy?) tackle a Zipworld challenge is almost as much fun as doing it yourself!



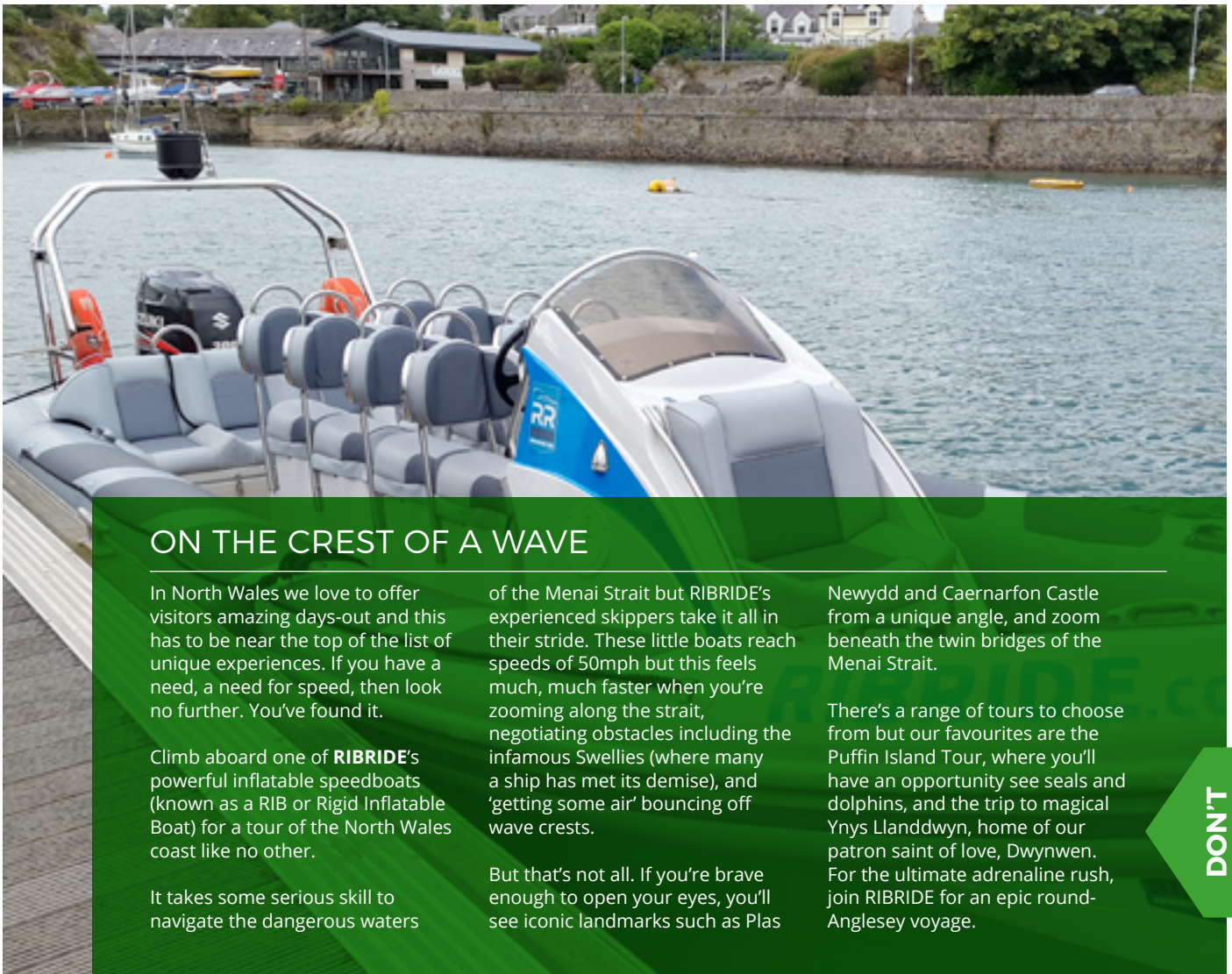
HOW LOW CAN YOU GO?

Snowdon's the highest point in England and Wales; you don't need to be a smartypants to know that. So here's a tougher quiz question - where's the deepest point people can reach in the UK?

It's near Blaenau Ffestiniog, part of **GoBelow's** epic five-kilometre-long underground adventure. To get from one end of the caverns to the other takes nine (that's NINE!) zipwires, including the world's longest subterranean zipwire, a free-fall, via feratta, and, let's be honest, nerves of steel.

At one point you are 1,300ft below the surface - that's a lot of double-decker buses. In theory you could climb Snowdon (3,560ft) and then GoBelow, for a combined climb/descent higher than Ben Nevis! But GoBelow's underground quest is a day-long affair so you'd have to be some sort of hardened Bear Grylls adventurer to do that.

For the less extreme, GoBelow has other cavern adventures that take a morning or an afternoon. Why not try a shorter course first and see if you like it? We've done it. It's unforgettable. If you're less of a fan of 'manufactured experiences' (even though the caverns are all man-made) this is the perfect adventure experience for you.



ON THE CREST OF A WAVE

In North Wales we love to offer visitors amazing days-out and this has to be near the top of the list of unique experiences. If you have a need, a need for speed, then look no further. You've found it.

Climb aboard one of **RIBRIDE's** powerful inflatable speedboats (known as a RIB or Rigid Inflatable Boat) for a tour of the North Wales coast like no other.

It takes some serious skill to navigate the dangerous waters

of the Menai Strait but RIBRIDE's experienced skippers take it all in their stride. These little boats reach speeds of 50mph but this feels much, much faster when you're zooming along the strait, negotiating obstacles including the infamous Swellies (where many a ship has met its demise), and 'getting some air' bouncing off wave crests.

But that's not all. If you're brave enough to open your eyes, you'll see iconic landmarks such as Plas

Newydd and Caernarfon Castle from a unique angle, and zoom beneath the twin bridges of the Menai Strait.

There's a range of tours to choose from but our favourites are the Puffin Island Tour, where you'll have an opportunity see seals and dolphins, and the trip to magical Ynys Llanddwyn, home of our patron saint of love, Dwynwen. For the ultimate adrenaline rush, join RIBRIDE for an epic round-Anglesey voyage.

**DON'T
MISS**

Cycling

NORTH WALES ON TWO WHEELS

North Wales is surprisingly compact when you jump on a cycle. Even without being super-fit you can cycle the length of the Conwy Valley. It's undulating but mostly flat all the way to Betws-y-Coed. There are long-distance off-road tracks between Bangor and Caernarfon almost as far as Criccieth on the Llyn Peninsula.

Another takes you along a former slate train trail from Bangor to Penrhyn Quarry and into the spectacular Nant Ffrancon valley (the glacial valley leading to Ogwen Cottage, Tryfan and the Glyders). Both gain ground gently that for the most part you may not even notice.

For the mud and grit of mountain biking, head for Gwydir Forest or Coed-y-Brenin (the black trail is called The Beast - say no more). For fast downhill fun wheel your way to Antur Stiniog on the steep, slatey slopes above Blaenau Ffestiniog. There are seven awesome trails here, graded blue to black.

Even if you don't own bikes, or don't want to cart them with you, there are plenty of hire cycle places in North Wales. Just turn up and ride on!

Bike Hire

Llandudno Bike Hire - Debbie and the team will be delighted to share their local knowledge to help you choose a route suited to your ability or desire to explore - they love to hear about your travels to find out how far their bikes have roamed. The shop stocks a wide range of cycles including pull-alongs for the kids and electric bikes.

Beics Betws - if your trip includes a plan to hit the trails but you're unable to bring your trail bike, head to this friendly hire shop in Betws y Coed. Ideally situated for tackling some of the region's toughest routes, including the world-renowned Marin trail.

Llyn Brenig - enjoy the sweeping vistas of Llyn Brenig in Cerrigydrudion from the saddle or tackle one of several trails surrounding the lake - there's a route suitable for all ages and abilities. We love it here and we think it's a great place to grow your cycling confidence - especially if it's 'been a while' or you have kids.

And if we still haven't quenched your thirst for adventure? Firstly, kudos to you and, secondly, bring it on, we're up for the challenge! Here are just a few more adventurous activities to try on your next trip to North Wales.

RACE, COME RAIN OR SHINE

Any budding Lewis Hamiltons will love the fact you can race karts indoors and outdoors in North Wales. If the weather's not playing ball, head for Caernarfon's **Redline Indoor Karting**. Perfect for families, groups of friends or just a bit of fun with your Other Half.

Want the wind-in-your-hair experience? Head outdoors and you have three great options - **Glasfryn Parc** off the main road between Caernarfon and Pwllheli, **Glan y Gors Park** off the A5 near Cerrigydrudion and Anglesey Go Karting by the A55 near Holyhead.

SEGWAY, YOUR WAY

Between the coastal towns of Criccieth and Pwllheli is the historic village of Llanystumdry; just outside the village and tucked away in the woods is **Dragon Raiders Park**. Here you can practise your Bear Grylls survival techniques, shoot paintball or jump on a segway and head off for a forest adventure.

You can ride on level paths and almost feel like your gliding along. There's also a "rally" trail option if you want a little more excitement. The great thing about this activity is that it's suited to the less mobile too. There's no need for Gramps to miss out as Dragon Raiders offers a senior trek tour as well. Ready? Steady? Roll!

WET AND WILD

Grab a paddle and head for the sea. Or a lake. Or a river. In North Wales, we've got water to match your mood.

Fancy an adrenaline rush? The **National White Water Centre** near Bala is the place to head for. The River Tryweryn is a foamy delight, great for rafting and some challenging canoeing.

If all that in-your-face water is too much, you might prefer to paddle the tranquil waters of Llyn Padarn by Llanberis. That's Snowdon behind you. Or Llyn Geirionydd, tucked away between craggy hills and Gwydir Forest.

Snowdonia Watersports can show you all the best spots for this most laid-back of adventure sports.

Then of course, there's the coast. North Wales has a lot of coast! Lose the paddle and try coasteering with **B-Active** based in Rhoscolyn instead - a unique combination of swimming, scrambling and rock-hopping - that gives you access-all-areas to our wild coastline. **Plas Menai** provide a range of watersports and has a terrific location on the Menai Strait.

From scenic drives to white-knuckle rides, adventure awaits. Fly above a quarry. Surf a river valley. Bounce around a cavern. Bring the bikes, or hire some when you get here. Trek forests, climb mountains. Stop a moment. Breathe in the views. That grin on your face is the sign of a great holiday.





Attractions

There are no brash theme parks in North Wales. No monster shopping complexes. What you get is understated... intimate... different.

Our attractions are often intertwined with our heritage, culture and natural environment. They make unique holiday memories because they are part of what makes North Wales...well, North Wales!

For instance, our narrow gauge railways were born from industrial endeavour. Most of our park attractions have strong connections with wildlife and nature. Even our most celebrated extravagance - the Italianate village of Portmeirion - just seems to fit its coastal location.

Many of our family-friendly attractions are also family run. Their passion translates into fun, often educational, experiences that leave an instant yet lasting impression. Bring the kids. Bring the grandparents. These are the attractions that will make your North Wales holiday!



FOREST FUN

Long before theme parks became popular, an entrepreneurial couple set up in North Wales with the idea of creating an adventure playground in the woods with an eco-theme.

Greenwood Forest Park, between Caernarfon and Bangor, can lay claim to being the first eco-park of its kind in the world.

Its Green Dragon Rollercoaster was certainly the first gravity-powered 'coaster. The weight of you and the family is all it needs to begin hurtling downwards. While gravity drives the rollercoaster, the sun powers a water ride.

There's Wales' longest sledge run, a barefoot trail, a giant bouncy 'cushion' (much more fun than a traditional bouncy castle, so our kids tell us!), mazes, tunnels and

TreeTop Towers, where scalable timber turrets reach for the sky. It's just the right size for a full day of family fun (and when we say family we mean all the family; it's dog-friendly too) and can get busy during high season but unlike other, bigger theme parks the queues for the rides are rarely long.

Winner of Best family Attraction in North Wales for 7 years running, Greenwood is designed for families with younger children, and is still innovative after so many years.

We suggest you ditch the iPad and switch off the TV; go down to the woods today and enjoy all the surprises!

ON THE RAILS

The Scottish Highlands get all the glory when it comes to scenic railway routes. That's ok. We know ours are just as good, and they're right here on your doorstep.

There are three lakeside railways to choose from, at **Bala** (Llyn Tegid), **Llanberis** (Llyn Padarn) and **Tal-y-Llyn** beneath Cadair Idris's rocky ramparts. In the east you can even climb aboard kids' favourite Thomas the Tank Engine, taking the **Llangollen Railway** along the graceful Dee Valley.

In Snowdonia further west you can ride a clockwise loop. Start early because it is a full day's tour. Begin in Llandudno and take the **Conwy Valley Railway** on a single-track branch line. The river shimmers beneath Snowdonia's wooded foothills as you head south, before you disappear into the longest

single-track tunnel in the UK.

At Blaenau Ffestiniog, change for the narrow-gauge **Ffestiniog Railway** to Porthmadog. No introduction needed there. At Porthmadog, change again for the **Welsh Highland Railway** to Caernarfon, through the pass of Aberglaslyn, its tunnels and river bridges, past Beddgelert and up into the wilderness of Snowdon's western flanks. Arrive beneath Caernarfon Castle at a new station (being built at the time of writing). Enough scenery for you? You'll still be smiling in your sleep.

Finally, though not strictly a narrow gauge railway, there's the granddaddy of them all - the **Snowdon Mountain Railway**. In fine weather it will take you to 3,560ft above sea level, or the highest point in England and Wales if you prefer!



ULTIMATE DAY-OUT: THE GREAT ORME

If you've been to Llandudno before, the chances are, you've visited the Great Orme. If you haven't, chances are it's on your must-visit list.

If you're looking for the ultimate day out, we think the Great Orme has it all. A short walk from from Llandudno's town centre, this majestic landmark is home to a kaleidoscope of flora and fauna and a host of family-friendly attractions.

First you'll have to choose how to get there. There's the **UK's longest**

cable car with stunning views. A **Victorian tramway** (still operating the original tramcars). A network of roads that take in heady heights and dizzying curves. And walking routes galore: up, over, around and down. Next, you'll need to decide what to do because, trust us, there's too much for just one visit.

Practise your carving on the **dry ski slope**? Zoom down Britain's longest **toboggan run**? Brush up on the Orme's unique geology at the **Summit Visitor Centre**? Go

below to explore the oldest **copper mines** in the world? Oh, and did we mention the scenic **Happy Valley**, the historic church that gives Llandudno its name and numerous caves (all with stories to tell)?

Ummm... how long did you say you were staying with us? **man-made** this is the perfect adventure experience for you.

DON'T MISS

If your busy schedule allows, you'll have time to cram in a few more attractions during your stay with us. But what to choose?

At the risk of sounding cliché there really is something for everyone to enjoy in North Wales and, best of all, it's all in easy reach no matter where you're staying.

WALK ON THE WILD SIDE

Even though North Wales is a haven for wildlife, not everyone has the patience of a saint or can be cloaked in camouflage to enjoy it!

Instead, to get up close and personal with our regional wildlife, visit the **RSPB Conwy Reserve** on the Conwy Estuary or **Anglesey Sea Zoo**, a marine conservation attraction on the Menai Strait.

Searching for something more exotic? A day out at the **Welsh Mountain Zoo** above Colwyn Bay will take you on a tour of global wildlife, while **Pili Palas** on Anglesey is home to a host of colourful butterflies and other unusual animals.

I AM NOT A NUMBER

The Italianate village that featured in the hit 1960s TV show *The Prisoner* needs little introduction. For many, **Portmeirion** is one of North Wales's 'must-visit' destinations. Indeed, it's so popular we've featured it on the front cover of this Guide.

Continental architecture mixed with idyllic Welsh landscape is a magical combination - you feel like you've stepped into a different world or perhaps a fairytale kingdom.

There's lots to do at here too, with activities to delight young and old (part of its enduring appeal, we think): lose yourself in the woods; play a game of giant chess; daydream a lead in your own romantic movie. At Portmeirion you can write your own story.

DOWN ON THE FARM

Alongside tourism, agriculture is an important part of the North Wales economy so it will come as no surprise to learn that some of our most popular attractions are farm-based.

Meet, touch and feed the animals at **Foel Farm Park** on Anglesey. Take a tractor ride and meet Foel's biggest residents, gentle shire horses that live in the top field. Youngsters can also enjoy pony rides, feed the baby animals and pet the rabbits, all under the supervision of the friendly and knowledgeable staff.

In Llandudno, at **Bodafon Farm Park** you'll find all the usual farm animals and farming fun (the adventure play fort here will keep the kids busy all day) plus some more unusual residents. Bodafon is also home to the Owl's Trust, a charity that rescues these beautiful birds of prey.

If we still haven't satisfied your craving for cuteness, visit **Dwyfor Ranch** Rabbit Farm and Animal Park. Here the kids get to handle bundles of fluffy bunnies and other cute furries to their hearts' content.

I BELIEVE IN FAIRIES

This delightful activity park is the perfect companion for Greenwood Forest Park. Just a few miles away from Greenwood, **Gypsy Wood** caters perfectly to the youngest members of your family. It's hard to resist the charm of this magical little place; the idyllic setting will have you breathing a sigh of relaxation.

There are lots of games and activities to keep little hands and minds busy: youngsters can visit the petting farm, go on a fairy hunt, explore the gypsy caravan and musical tree house. With tunnels, trampolines and play areas galore - your journey home will be a quiet one! Our favourite? The garden railway is always big hit with our kids!



GARDENS WITHIN A GARDEN

North Wales is one big, beautiful garden! Yet within it are a number of stunning horticultural preserves. Even if you're not green-fingered you cannot fail to be impressed.

National Trust's **Bodnant Garden**, set in the Conwy Valley with views to Snowdonia, is a world-class garden with 80 acres to explore. Whichever season you visit, it's stunning. In winter it's a frosty miracle, and in spring a riot of colour. Summer sees Bodnant as lush as anywhere in the UK, and in autumn it is ablaze with fiery colours.

Elsewhere, explore the secret garden at **Plas Cadnant** on Anglesey (look for the jasper-red rocks in the woodland stream), or **Plas yn Rhiw** high above Hell's Mouth on the Llyn Peninsula. Did you know, the small and perfectly-formed garden of **Plas Brondanw** is where Clough Williams-Ellis honed his ideas for Portmeirion?



Not far from Portmeirion is the stately **Plas Tan y Bwlch**, a country house with gardens set in the wooded hills above the Dwyrdd estuary. Further east, **Bodrhyddan's** eight acres include a delightful woodland walk bursting with wildlife.

OH, I DO LIKE TO BE BESIDE THE SEASIDE!

There's nothing quite like a stroll on the pier! The salty sea air, the smell of fish and chips, the sound of feet on the wooden boards. North Wales' best two piers are **Llandudno** and **Bangor**, both Grade II listed beauties that hark back to a time when the idea of the seaside holiday was still forming.

Llandudno's pier - the longest in Wales - boasts shops, stalls and arcades. Bangor, also known as Garth Pier, is quieter, with a few stalls but surrounded by stunning views. Is there a better place to walk off those fish and chips, we ask you?

TAKE AIM

Peek into the woods by the A55 between Bodelwyddan and Abergele and you might catch a glimpse of a missile launcher. No, this isn't a secret military base, but **Adventure Paintball**, a paintball park where the props include the missile launcher, tanks, landrovers and even a graveyard as part of the fun war games. There are 12 different game scenarios playable over 69 acres of woodland. Take aim and enjoy!

WELL WORTH ITS SALT

Former US president Barack Obama is a fan. So are many of the world's top chefs. Now you can visit and see how Anglesey Sea Salt - **Halen Mon** - finds its way from the sea to the dinner plate.

Saltcote Tours gives you a 50-minute masterclass in what goes into making the world's best salt, including tutored salt tasting. Salt tasting - who'd have thought there's such a thing? There's a gift shop too, so you can take home a little taste of Anglesey to your kitchen.

Rainy day places

Ah, there's the sound of rain on the windows. Don't worry, you don't have to abandon your plans for a day out. Here's our top 10 attractions that make the perfect rainy-away-day!

King Arthur's Labyrinth - take an underground boat trip to a waterfall at this unique attraction that uses an old slate mine to explore our best-loved Welsh myths and legends.

Beumaris Gaol - tucked away in one of the town's backstreets, Beumaris Gaol takes you on a tour down dimly lit corridors and into grim cells.

Great Orme Copper mines - now believed to be largest prehistoric mine in the world, with chambers still being discovered. Great for a morning or afternoon of underground adventure.

Electric Mountain - travel deep under a mountain and tour a hydroelectric power station that can generate 1,728 megawatts of power in just 90 seconds.

Airworld Aviation Museum - take a seat in a real vintage aircraft or get up close to one of the most iconic aircraft in the UK - the Sea King Search and Rescue helicopter.

Lechwedd Slate Caverns - this ever-expanding subterranean world features multiple tours and adventures and has become one of North Wales's leading attractions. Don't miss!

Bonkerz Fun Centre - a giant soft play centre that makes adults want to be kids again! Oh, and the kids will love it too. In Llandudno.

Piggery Pottery - paint or "throw" your own pot (that means making one on a potter's wheel) at this great place on the main road between Caernarfon and Llanberis.

National Sate Museum - one of the best museums around, a mix of indoor and outdoor areas, so many things to see and do - and free entry too.

Beacon Climbing Centre - the largest indoor climbing centre in North Wales, perfect for learning or if the weather's too bad to do the real thing.

Heritage

Wales is a land with a proud heritage; a country steeped in myth and legend. Ours is a turbulent history but it's one the Welsh have learned to embrace and now we long to share it. With hundreds of castles, historic buildings and stately homes scattered across the countryside, visitors don't have to venture far to encounter the past.

North Wales is home to some of the most iconic of these buildings; structures that have war, conquest, rebellion, revenge, love, loss and high adventure woven into their very stones.

Thankfully, we live in more peaceful times but these buildings stand to remind us of a bygone era, a time when Wales was being melded into the country we know and love today. It was a time when heroes fought for what they believed in and monsters really did roam the earth.

The good news is organisations such as Cadw, UNESCO and the National Trust are working hard to preserve these buildings while making them relevant for a 21st century audience. Events, festivals and activities for young and old taking place all year round bring the past to life in a thrilling and innovative way, you'll come away with a new appreciation for our history that you never knew you had!

So don your helmet, grab your sword and embark on a quest to visit the most epic historic attractions North Wales has to offer...





CONWY CASTLE

Part of the infamous Ring of Iron, a string of castles built by the English king Edward I in the 13th century to suppress the native Welsh people. Sitting proudly on the edge of the Conwy Estuary, the castle and town walls are part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site that also includes Caernarfon castle and walls, and Beaumaris and Harlech castles.

The castle at Conwy dominates the rolling Welsh landscape for miles around and is undoubtedly one of the finest examples of English castle-building in existence.

Ascend one of the eight towers for stunning panoramic views of the coast and mountains, and to fully appreciate the strategic importance of this mighty fortress.

Elsewhere, the medieval town walls are amongst the most complete in Europe. Comprising 21 watchtowers and 3 imposing gateways, a walk along the walls will give you a fascinating snapshot of life in historic Conwy as you peep into the gardens, houses and alleyways of the town below.



CAERNARFON CASTLE

A fortress fit for a king, Caernarfon was designed to imitate the rose-hued palaces of the exotic Near East. But this royal residence was also intended to strike fear into those it ruled over.

The largest and most imposing of Edward's Ring of Iron, Caernarfon was less a defensive structure and more a tangible display of power - a bricks-and-mortar symbol of English power over the Welsh.

Edward had the existing Welsh village razed to the ground to make way for a planned walled-town at the foot of the castle,

where only English merchants could live, incidentally. He even contentiously crowned his son the first English Prince of Wales within its very walls - a royal tradition that continues to this very day.

A beautiful building with a cruel past, visit Caernarfon today and appreciate it for what it is - a stunning example of ambitious castle design with a PR slant. From its fanciful polygonal towers to its ostentatious exterior, Caernarfon served one purpose: to remind those who was conqueror... and who was conquered.



DOLWYDDELAN CASTLE

Standing atop a small hill overlooking the little village of the same name, Dolwyddelan is what some might call a fairytale castle. This lone tower looks out across the gorgeous Lledr Valley and it's hard not to imagine a lonely damsel imprisoned here awaiting rescue by her handsome prince.

The true story of Dolwyddelan is almost as epic as the imagined. A seat of the princes of Gwynedd, the castle was built in the 12th century and was the reputed birthplace of Prince Llewelyn 'the Great', who fought for Welsh independence against the much-maligned English King John.

PLAS NEWYDD

Imposing to behold, standing proudly on the shore of the Menai Strait, Plas Newydd is a stately home full of surprises. In fact, it could quite possibly claim to be the ultimate National Trust property.

Acres of wild woodland, full of fun and games for the young and young and heart, give way to gorgeous formal gardens the Trust is so well-known for. At its heart is the house, a beautifully preserved snapshot of the life of the aristocracy in the 1930s, not closed off like so many stately homes but open to curious explorers.

We think the best way to experience Plas Newydd is just to wander, to see where your feet take you and what discoveries you make along the way - and look out for the red squirrels too.

**DON'T
MISS**



CRICCIETH CASTLE 🏰 - a coastal fortress that once belonged to the Welsh... or was that the English? You'll have to go along yourself to uncover this castle's tumultuous history!

BEAUMARIS CASTLE 🏰 - the last and largest of Edward I's Welsh castles and the finest example of concentric 'walls within walls' castle building in the UK. It is quite beautiful to behold.

BODELWYDDAN CASTLE 🏰 - not a castle in the true sense of the word, this grand stately home and country park is a fantastic day out for all the family. <https://bodewyddan-castle.co.uk>

DOLBADARN CASTLE 🏰 - guarding a strategic point at the foot of mighty Snowdon, this authentic Welsh castle offers stunning views of Snowdonia from its tower. Don't forget your camera!

RHUDDLAN CASTLE 🏰 - a castle with a bloodier history than most, Rhuddlan was fought over continuously for centuries owing to its strategically important location on the River Clwyd.

HARLECH CASTLE 🏰 - if you've watched a Wales rugby match you'll know our unofficial national anthem Men of Harlech. It was penned here during a David versus Goliath standoff between Welsh soldiers and a Yorkist army of thousands.

VALLE CRUCIS ABBEY 🏰 - a magical spot, perfect for the contemplation and reflection beloved of the monks who called it home. Dissolved by Henry VIII, the abbey survived the king's wrath and is remarkably well preserved.

PLAS MAWR 🏰 - after Conwy Castle, the most visited historic attraction in the walled town of Conwy. Visit this Elizabethan merchant's house for a glimpse of how the 'other half' lived in the 16th century.

ABERCONWY HOUSE 🏠 - one of the oldest, dated properties in Wales. This stunning medieval townhouse at the heart of the walled town reveals much about daily life in Conwy down the centuries.

PENRHYN CASTLE 🏰 - with a steam train museum, a house of Downton Abbey proportions and a year-round packed schedule of seasonal events this gothic-inspired stately home is an amazing day out for all ages.

ERDDIG 🏠 - go back over 200 years to a time when life above and below stairs was very different indeed. This fascinating house and gardens tells the story of its people, not just its place in Victorian society.

SEGONTIUM 🏰 - Caernarfon is best known for its castle but long before the English came Wales was invaded by the Romans. This important fort was a jumping off point for military operations in the last Celtic stronghold - Anglesey.

PONTECYSYLTE AQUEDUCT 🏰 - the longest and the highest working aqueduct in the world, this gravity-defying feat of Industrial Revolution engineering quite rightly holds World Heritage Site status.

GWYDIR CASTLE 🏰 - an atmospheric medieval mansion nestled in the Conwy Valley. Once the home of the powerful Wynn family, the house retains many of its original features... and residents if you believe the ghost stories!

BRYN CELLI DDU 🏰 - Anglesey was the sacred isle of the Druids and this Neolithic henge was one of their most holy sites. Visit for the Summer Solstice and be prepared to be blown away as the sun illuminates the innermost burial chamber.

GWYRCH CASTLE 🏰 - a 19th century country house that resembles a fairytale castle. A team of dedicated volunteers are in the process of restoring Gwyrch to its former glory.

Key to symbols:

- 🏰 CADW
- 🏠 National Trust
- 🏰 Charitable Trust
- 🏠 Privately owned

With so many historic buildings with fascinating stories to tell, where will you step back in time on your next visit to North Wales? Visit our website for even more inspiration!

NORTHWALESOLIDAYCOTTAGES.CO.UK

CADW



If you visit any historic site in North Wales, chances are it is cared for by an organisation called Cadw. Cadw is the branch of Welsh Government responsible for preserving and maintaining Welsh historic monuments. As well as helping care for not one but three World Heritage Sites, Cadw is the custodian of almost 30,000 historic and culturally significant buildings across Wales. These range from vaulting medieval abbeys to tiny holy wells, and imposing stone fortresses to magnificent industrial constructions.

Cadw is a Welsh word that means 'to keep' or 'to protect' and that's exactly what it does.

CADW EXPLORER PASS

Have we whet your appetite for Welsh history? Cadw's 3 and 7 day Explorer Passes offer a great value, flexible way of touring North Wales heritage sites during your visit. The Pass enables you to explore dozens of Cadw attractions at your own speed, whatever the weather and as many times as you like. Choose a side and go! With the Explorer Pass you can follow Edward I's army along the coast from Flint to Harlech and see how the infamous Ring of Iron was constructed. Or join the rebels and Prince Llewelyn and learn how the Welsh became masters of guerrilla warfare.

Wherever you see the 🏰 in our guide, you can use the Cadw Explorer Pass.

You can also buy your Explorer Pass when booking your holiday through North Wales Holiday Cottages.

NATIONAL TRUST



Did you know the first ever parcel of land was donated to the National Trust right here in Wales? The so-called 'Citadel of Light', a hillside above Barmouth in Gwynedd with stunning views of Snowdonia and the Llyn Peninsula, was gifted to the Trust by a local philanthropist in 1895.

Fast forward a century and the National Trust now cares for 46,000 hectares of land, 157 miles of coastline and 500 of Wales' best-loved historic gardens, stately homes and buildings.

A visit to a National Trust property offers a fun-filled and fascinating day out for families, couples and even our four-legged friends and North Wales is home to more than its fair share.

A photograph of two hikers standing on a mossy bank, looking at a waterfall in a lush forest. The hiker in the foreground is wearing a light blue long-sleeved shirt and grey trousers, and has a large red backpack with a white water bottle holder. The hiker behind them is wearing a dark jacket. The waterfall is surrounded by green foliage and rocks.

Great Outdoors

If you love being outdoors you'll be no stranger to North Wales.

Even if you haven't visited our region yet you'll be familiar with what it has to offer. It's true, in the grand scheme of things we're a small region in a small country but when it comes to the Great Outdoors we always go large.

A vaulted sky that goes on forever, and is forever changing. Jagged mountain peaks that graze bountiful clouds. Rolling hills that literally go on and on and on. Moorland - vast and wild and infinite - as far as the eye can see. And water - water everywhere! - flowing without pause from countless lakes, rivers and waterfalls towards a far-reaching coastline.

So grab your boots, pack your rucksack and explore North Wales. Trust us, it's great outdoors here.

FAMILY EXPLORERS

The diversity of the North Wales landscape attracts all sorts - from seasoned hikers (Edmund Hillary trained for his Everest climb in Snowdonia, you know) to fair-weather walkers, there's somewhere and something for everyone here.

Families are especially well-catered for and the region has a wide selection of accessible, family-friendly walks that will give your little ones a real taste of the Great Outdoors without venturing too far off the beaten track. The accessibility of these routes mean they are particularly suitable for wheelchair explorers seeking their own slice of wild Wales too.

Having our own band of mini-hikers, these routes are tried-and-tested and have received the 'minis' seal of approval. So, start them young and try one yourselves!

Just off the A55 midway between Conwy and Bangor, **Aber Falls** is a firm family favourite when it comes to scenic countryside ambles. At just under two miles, this waymarked route takes you through stunning Welsh countryside that includes a brooding pine forest, a river valley and ancient oak woodland. A Visitor Centre at the halfway mark is a good resting point where you can learn more about the valley's industrial past. The waterfall itself is breathtaking and a popular destination for dog walkers, photographers and, of course, families who find this a pleasant hike just the right length for little legs.



For our family, a walk around **Llyn Crafnant** is the perfect way to spend a Sunday afternoon. This circular, waymarked trail (mainly on the flat) takes you around the lake, through the Gwydir Forest and to the foot of the Carneddau Mountains before returning to the start along a quiet country lane. Families with older children might like to hike up to Llyn Geirionydd too; it's not far but is an historic spot being the birthplace of the bard, Taliesin.

If you love views then an amble through **Coedy Gopa**, a woodland covering the hillside above Abergele, is a must. There are several circular walks but our favourite is the hike to the summit where you'll find the remains of a massive Iron Age hill fort and, of course, those awesome views up and down the North Wales coast.

Kids love the story of Prince Llewelyn's faithful hound, Gelert, and a stroll along the riverbank to visit his monument in **Beddgelert** is the perfect way to soak up the scenery of the Glaslyn Valley and explore this gorgeous alpine village. At just one mile long this walk is both short and sweet, meaning even the shortest of legs won't tire.

For families who *really* want to get away from it all, a hike around the lake at **Cwm Idwal** is unmissable. The trail takes you deep into the mountains but is a fairly easy circular hike of 3 miles. The lake, sheltered by cliffs known as the Devil's Kitchen, feels remote and wild but you're only ever a short hike back to the carpark and civilisation - handy if the kids start moaning! (not suitable for buggies or wheelchairs)

CULTURAL EXPLORERS

Of course, not everyone who loves the Great Outdoors is interested in attempting the longest or the highest to dazzle their friends. There are those of us who love the outdoors for its intimate relationship with our past.

Taking in everything from our industrial past to our maritime heritage, meeting Welsh legends - old and not so old - along the way, and often treading the same paths our ancestors trod these trails will take cultural explorers back in time, literally.

A welcome sight for sailors braving the rock-strewn waters off the Anglesey coast, **South Stack Lighthouse** perches atop the tiny island of Ynys Lawd. This isn't a long walk but what makes it interesting is that the lighthouse can only be accessed by a puff-worthy descent of 400 steps. That's not all, a hair-raising bridge crossing must be made to

reach the island - it's a dramatic experience. Remember, what goes down must come up; you've still got a 400 step ascent to complete the walk!

Sticking to the coast, the holy island of **Bardsey** has been a site of pilgrimage for many centuries. It was once the home of Celtic saint, Cadfan, and is the reputed resting place of Merlin. Legend has it he slumbers here, Snow White-like in a glass castle, awaiting a call in our time of greatest need. The short boat journey from Aberdaron is a memorable start to your exploration, as the boat expertly navigates the dangerous rip-tides that give Bardsey its Welsh name (Ynys Enlli - Island of Currents). You can walk the island in a couple of hours but the magic that shrouds this place will surely make you tarry longer.

The 85 mile long, circular **Snowdonia Slate Trail** was opened in 2017 to allow walkers to explore the region's slate mining heritage. Sights include Port Penrhyn in Bangor where slates were exported by sea to 'roof the world', Aberglaslyn Bridge, where the devil is said to lurk and Blaenau Ffestiniog, a town at the heart of Snowdonia's mining industry. The trail is ideal for all ages and abilities because you can walk it all in one go or do it section-by-section. It provides a fascinating insight into the history and culture of our most important export and the people who mined it.

Following the traditional pilgrims' route from Basingwerk Abbey in Holywell to Bardsey Island, the **North Wales Pilgrim's Way** is our answer to the iconic Santiago de Compostela pilgrimage of northern Spain. Just like the Slate Trail it's accessible to all levels of walkers and can

be completed in one go or in sections (you can even get your Pilgrim's Passport stamped along the way). At 130 miles long, it follows the exact route taken by medieval pilgrims and is a particularly tangible way to better understand our ancestors - something very special indeed.

Many years ago a young girl walked barefoot 28 miles from her home deep in the mountains of Snowdonia to the town of Bala to spend her life savings on one of the first copies of the Bible in Welsh. On her arrival she was dismayed to learn there were no copies left. Don't worry, the story has a happy ending but we don't do spoilers here so you'll just have to find out for yourself! The **Mary Jones Walk** follows in the footsteps of one of Wales' most iconic women, from the slopes of Cadair Idris, through rolling countryside, to the shores of Bala Lake.

ACTIVE EXPLORERS

Want to push yourself with a challenging hike? Snowdonia's blessed with some of the best hiking and climbing the UK has to offer. You can walk, scramble, climb, run or cycle our range of terrains. While the focus here is on walking, many of these routes can be adapted to include rock scrambling and climbing too.

Snowdon is, of course, the jewel in the crown. It counterbalances its popularity with sheer size and number of walks on offer. There are five major routes to the summit, several with variations that provide opportunities to enjoy a circular walk. These don't include the (in)famous Snowdon horseshoe, which involves picking your way along the knife-edge ridge (arête) of Crib Goch and along Lliwedd's (East Ridge) searing escarpment.

Of the five main routes, the **Llanberis Path** is the easiest and most popular. It starts from the village of Llanberis and is a nine-mile, there-and-back gradual climb to the summit. It follows the route of the Snowdon Mountain Railway which adds its own interest. Below Clogwyn Station you can walk over the Llechog Ridge, away from the path, to escape the crowds for a spell.

Starting out from Llyn Cwellyn lake to the west is the **Ranger Path**, a less trodden route. This path zig-zags its way up to Clogwyn Du'r Arddur and follows the cliffs before joining the Llanberis route just shy of the summit.

The **Rhyd Ddu** path is one of our favourites. It's quieter than the routes on the Llanberis side of the mountain and follows breathtaking, airy ridges to the summit. One short section is narrow but not as scary as Crib Goch and no scrambling is required. You can turn this path into a circular by returning via Allt Maenderyn (often referred to as the South Ridge) and then following an old slate quarry track back to the start.

With an ascent of 3,330ft, the **Watkin Path** is the hardest of the main routes up Snowdon. It follows a river into a cwm, a location that doubled as the Khyber Pass in the famous Carry On film. You pass old mine workings before ascending a ridge, then cross a tricky scree slope before joining the Rhyd Ddu route in its final stretches. Again, the South Ridge can help turn the Watkin Path into a circular on the second part of the walk.

Finally, the **Miner's Track** and the **Pyg Track** set off from the same point at Pen-y-pass (limited parking). The Miner's Track is wide and surfaced and is the easiest way to walk as far as Glaslyn lake. Unfortunately, that's as far as this track goes! You then need to clamber up a steep slope to rejoin the Pyg Track, which then steeply zig-zags towards the summit. This is an accident blackspot as in winter this part of the mountain sees no sun and it can remain icy long after it's melted elsewhere.

Other Snowdonia mountains worth walking are the amazing Glyderau of **Glyder Fawr** and **Glyder Fach**, with their incredible splintered-rock summits. Both are best accessed from Ogwen Cottage off the A5. **Tryfan** stands out from the Glyder ridge so if you're thinking of combining them, be aware that you'll have a further descent and ascent to add to your day. To the west, **Y Garn** is a great mountain walk and, thanks to its own path, makes a circular walk via Devil's Kitchen relatively straightforward.

Across the Ogwen valley, the Carneddau are less walked mostly because they are not so easy to access. Your best starting point is along the A5 between Ogwen Cottage and Capel Curig (the footpath sign by Glan Dena) for ascents of **Pen yr Ole Wen**, **Carnedd Dafydd** and **Carnedd Llewelyn**. A fine return ridge walk along Pen yr Helgi Ddu brings you back to the A5 some 500 yards from where you started, but it's a long and tiring circular walk.

Moel Siabod stands somewhat on its own but this too is a great mountain walk. Park near the Moel Siabod Cafe (great pizzas here) at Pont Cyfyng and follow the track uphill to a gate, past a small lake and some mine workings, before ascending a ridge to the summit. You can turn this last part into a loop by descending via Daear Ddu and around Llyn y Foel.

Further south, **Cadair Idris** provides some of the best mountain walking in Wales. Our pick of the routes to the summit is via the Minfordd Path, which climbs steeply through oak woodlands and past waterfalls, before reaching a terrific glacial cwm with a lake. It then takes the high route over a ridge to the summit. You can return via the Mynydd Moel ridge back to the treeline and rejoin the Minfordd Path back to the car park.

North Wales has plenty of excellent hillwalking with less punishing terrain. The **Clwydian hills** are an area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and it's easy to see why. This chain of rounded hills forms a natural barrier between east and west and the historic Offa's Dyke path runs its length, connecting with many more paths to make simple circular ambles as well as multiple hill-bagging walks possible. **Moel Famau** is its highest point but **Moel Arthur** and **Penycloddiau** both feature hillforts and are less popular if you prefer solitude. Whichever you walk, the views across the Vale of Clwyd to the Denbigh Moors and Snowdonia are some of the best in Wales.



GUIDED WALKS IN SNOWDONIA

Guided treks are a great way to get the most from your outdoor pursuits. **Snowdonia Adventures** offer guided walks throughout the National Park, as well as other high-octane pursuits. If you're a hiker, biker or fell runner, **Two Feet Two Wheels** will introduce you to some of the best and most challenging routes North Wales has to offer. For a complete day's entertainment consider **Summit to Savour** who offer guided mountain walks, gorge walks and rock climbing as well as catering options for breakfast, lunch and or dinner

GUIDED
WALKS



SCENIC EXPLORERS

If you love to feel at one with nature these vast and secluded spots are the perfect places to lose yourself and just... wander for a while. To get the most out of these routes, you don't need to be an experienced hiker but we think a good level of fitness is a plus. Once you start exploring, you won't want to stop.

The idyllic pine woods of **Newborough Forest** on the shores of the Menai Strait on Anglesey are a haven for wildlife, including Anglesey's rarest resident, the red squirrel, and one of the largest raven colonies in the world. Several waymarked trails help walkers make the most of this tranquil spot.

Deep in the heart of the Conwy Valley, the **Gwydir Forest** covers an area of 28 square miles between the villages of Betws-y-Coed and Llanrwst. With a fascinating history dating back to Victorian times, when the area was extensively mined, the forest is home to a network of waymarked trails, picnic spots and viewpoints for all tastes and abilities.

The historic **Lledr Valley** was once a stronghold of the Princes of Gwynedd and, before that, one of the main routes into Wales for the invading Romans. This is the gateway to Snowdonia, running from verdant Betws-y-Coed to dark and steely Blaenau Ffestiniog. Choose from ambles along Sarn Helen Roman road to a serious hike up Moel Siabod, there's something to please all tastes.



EPIC DRIVES

More of a fairweather walker than a hardened hiker? Love the Great Outdoors but don't consider yourself an 'outdoorsy' person? No problem. You can still enjoy the grandeur of North Wales but on four wheels rather than two feet. Enjoy movie-quality panoramas from the comfort of your vehicle by heading out on an epic drive.

Choose the pit stops and photo opps (of which there should be many) and embark on one, or all, of our favourite road trips, each taking in the very best of our Welsh landscapes. And with the unpredictable Welsh weather, they make a great rainy day activity too!

Coast & Country - Beautiful all year round but looking particularly radiant in the autumn, a drive along A470 or the B106 down the **Conwy Valley** should be on the itinerary of everyone visiting North Wales. Twenty miles of forest-fringed, winding country roads (a driver's dream), a choice of routes, historic landmarks and several quaint Welsh villages waymark your route from coast to countryside.

Surf's up - The **Llyn Peninsula** is an unspoilt stretch of coastline that resembles a pointing hand on the map of Wales. Boasting over 100 miles of coastline and more than 20 beaches (not to mention countless hidden coves), a drive along the Lands' End of Wales on the A499 takes in trendy Abersoch, colourful Llanbedrog, surfing Mecca Hell's Mouth, picture postcard Porth Dinallen and, right at the tip, Aberdaron.

Scale the heights - If the heady heights of Snowdon and her neighbours are too much for you, do the next best thing and admire these stately peaks from ground level. One of the most challenging hill walks in the UK, the **Snowdon Horseshoe** takes in the peaks of Snowdon, Crib Goch and Garnedd Ugain. Drivers will take a sweeping drive on the A4086, down the Dyffryn Mymbyr Valley, up and over the Llanberis Pass (a traditional starting point for Snowdon ascents) and descend into valley of Nant Peris.

Where there's a will, there's a way

WALES COASTAL PATH

When it opened in 2012 it was a world first for Wales, the very first uninterrupted walking route along a nation's coastline. We're extremely proud of our Coastal Path; with almost 900 miles of trails at your feet there is something for everyone here.

Whether you're a seasoned walker planning your next expedition, a runner looking for a new PB, a family wanting the quintessential seaside stroll (complete with candy floss and ice cream), a dog owner in search of Rover's next walkies or a biker looking to cruise with a view - the Wales Coastal Path is for you, all of you.



THE WALES WAY

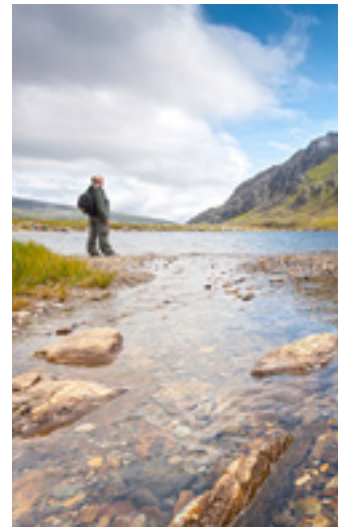
Brand new for 2018, the Wales Way is a series of touring routes created to show off the very best of our country.

With a choice of, not one, but three routes visitors can explore a specific region in more detail or traverse the whole country at their own speed, whichever way suits them best - on foot, by car or bike, or using public transport.

The Coastal Way runs for 180 miles from Aberdaron at the tip of the Llyn Peninsula hugging the coast all the way to St David's in the south. **The Cambrian Way** takes visitors 185 miles across country from the Queen of Welsh Resorts, Llandudno, through the heart of Wales to Cardiff, our nation's capital.

Last but by no means least, **the North Wales Way** - a 75 mile driving route taking in the very best of the North Wales coast and its environs, from the Welsh border to Holyhead on Anglesey. Although it follows closely the path of the A55 expressway it's a multi-modal route that encourages visitors to get off the beaten track and experience North Wales in a variety of different ways: on foot, on horseback, by boat, segway, heritage railway or bike for example. The choice is yours!

Visitors to North Wales enjoy easy access to all three routes, with sections of the Cambrian and Coastal Ways plus the full length of the North Wales Way just waiting to be explored.



WILD WALKS

If you're thirst to answer the call of the wild is great but you're not an experienced hiker, fear not, Snowdonia is surprisingly accessible for enthusiastic walkers, properly prepared. Here's a selection of walks that will make you feel miles from anywhere but not leave you aching for days afterwards.

Capel Curig to Crimpiau - the photographer's one - 3-4 hours: a relatively short ascent made interesting with a variety of terrain and near-perfect 360 degree views of Snowdonia from the summit.

Croesor to Cnicht - the atmospheric one - 5-6 hours: a circular walk that looks more challenging than it really is, taking in the summit of the 'Welsh Matterhorn', the abandoned quarry of Rhosydd and the old Blaencwm hydro-electric power station.

Pen-y-Pass to Beddgelert - the unconventional one - 4-5 hours: many people use Pen-y-Pass as a starting off point for Snowdon; this walk reverses that thinking with a stunning valley descent with a variety of gentle terrain.

Abersoch to Pwllheli - the coastal one - 2-3 hours: follow the Wales Coastal Path between two jewels in the Llyn Peninsula's crown, you'll pass through the picture perfect seaside village of Llanbedrog, complete with rainbow-coloured beach huts.

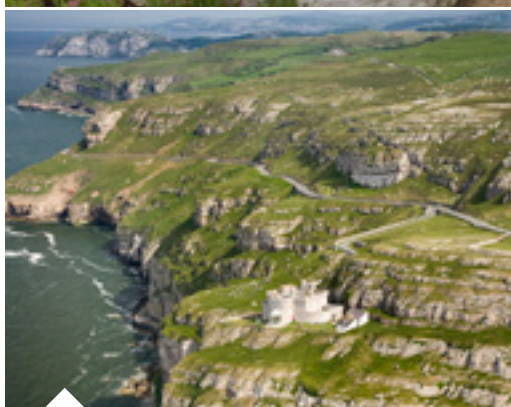
Barmouth to Penmaen Pool - the one with choices - 2-3 hours: opt for a lovely amble along the Mawddach Trail, or ramp it up and branch off along the southern flank of the Rhinogydd hills for an added challenge.

EYES WIDE OPEN: 5 LEGENDARY VIEWS

We asked the NWHC team to choose their favourite North Wales view - a scenic vista that sums up our region in one shot-worthy frame. They didn't disappoint!

SHELL GROTTO, PORTMEIRION

"Most people visit Portmeirion to explore the quirky architecture and gardens but take a walk up to the Shell Grotto and look seawards. The view of the Dwyryd Estuary really is out of this world." - **David**



GREAT ORME SUMMIT

"One a clear day - or night - there can be few places in the UK to boast such an awesome view. The Great Orme delivers a near-360 panorama of your surroundings. The mountains of Snowdonia, the island of Anglesey, the Wirral, Liverpool and even Blackpool can all be glimpsed from this amazing vantage point." - **Laura**

CONWY CASTLE FROM DEGANWY

"I don't have to venture far to enjoy my favourite view! High above NWHC HQ in Deganwy, a short, sharp hike rewards with a view of Conwy Castle framed by the moody Carneddau Mountains. In one view, that pretty much sums up home for me." - **Barbara**



LLEDR VALLEY FROM THE TRAIN

"We catch the Conwy Valley Railway from Llandudno and enjoy the beautiful journey down the Conwy Valley but, for me, the most spectacular moment is when the secretive Lledr Valley reveals herself in all her splendour after the train leaves Betws-y-Coed." - **Richard**



LLANDDWYN ISLAND FROM NEWBOROUGH BEACH

"There's something so romantic about strolling hand in hand along the beach towards Llanddwyn with someone special. As the island comes into view you catch a tantalising glimpse of the ruined church - where Wales' patron saint of love, Dwynwen, spent her days praying for lovers everywhere." - **Tori**

Beaches

It might feel like it at times but you're never far from the coast when you visit North Wales. Did you know that from the summit of Snowdon, you're still only ten miles from the sea?

With over 200 miles of coast - everything from cliffs and coves, to sand dunes and shingle bays - North Wales has an incredibly

varied coastal landscape. Beachcombers, rockpoolers, castle builders, promenaders, sun-worshippers, surf bunnies, paddlers, swimmers, divers and dog walkers. If you're a beach person, we've got a beach for you. Yes, we've got the highest mountain and the longest place-name but did you know we've also got the longest pier, the oldest

Punch & Judy show, the largest dolphin pod and the longest coastal path in the UK? And you can find all these record breakers on the North Wales coast!



2018 IS THE YEAR OF THE SEA

Building on the success of Wales's Year of Adventure and Year of Legends, 2018 has been crowned Year of the Sea and will celebrate our outstanding coastline, lakes, rivers and journeys to the sea.

We're really excited to spend the next twelve months spotlighting one of our best natural assets and sharing with visitors the beautiful and varied waters of North Wales. Whether it's a walk to one of our many waterfalls or some of the delicious food harvested from our coastal waters, we'll be giving you the inside track on the Year of the Sea each week on the blog.



NORTH COAST

Building on the success of Wales's Year Ice cream, Punch & Judy, funfairs, buckets and spades. If you love a good old fashioned day at the seaside, then our North Coast has the beach for you. It's fun and frolics all the way: from the bright lights of Llandudno and Rhyl to the pristine golden sands of Colwyn Bay and Prestatyn. If the sun's shining, there's never a dull moment.

LLANDUDNO NORTH SHORE - a sweeping sand and shingle bay contained at either end by the Great and Little Ormes, it's not hard to see why the Victorians picked the spot to build a resort. The stately pier, an ornate bandstand and nostalgic seaside activities make it a great beach for families and sightseers.

LLANDUDNO WEST SHORE - on the quieter side of the town, this flat, sandy beach stretches for miles and has beautiful views of Snowdonia and Anglesey. Visit early evening for a technicolour sunset to rival Ibiza's!

COLWYN BAY - having recently benefited from a multi-million pound regeneration scheme, it's one of the most popular beaches in the area. Flat golden sands and safe bathing waters, plus designated areas for dogs and watersports.

TALACRE - extensive flat sands backed by dunes that are a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The candy-striped Point of Ayre Lighthouse is popular with photographers and makes a stunning focal point at dawn and dusk.

PRESTATYN BEACH - in reality, a trio of beaches connected by a four-mile long promenade - Ffrith, Central and Barkby. Perfect for walkers, cyclists, families with buggies or people with mobility issues. On a clear day, you might spy Blackpool Tower!

ANGLESEY

Secretive, rocky coves and sweeping, infinite bays, Anglesey has it all when it comes to beaches. Play all day in the waves or wander alone with the seabirds. There's a beach for wherever the mood takes you - in high season or low. This is what makes Anglesey the ultimate beach lovers destination.

RHOSNEIGR - the twin beaches of Traeth Crigyll and Traeth Llydan, are holders of Green Coast Awards so expect excellent water quality and a clean and tidy shoreline. Popular with tourists and watersports enthusiasts, they are a hive of activity all year round.

PORTH NOBLA - a wide sandy beach nestled between two rocky outcrops. A lovely spot for families who want a traditional day at the beach - you can build sandcastles, paddle and even explore the rockpools, perfect!

Porth Trecastell 'Cable Bay' - a picture-postcard rocky bay complete with foaming surf and backed by sand dunes, it's popular with the locals and the wider surfing community. It's a sheltered spot so it's a great beach to visit all year round too.

TREARDDUR BAY - one of favourite spots on Anglesey, Treaddur Bay is a wide, sandy beach with excellent facilities, including some of the best restaurants on the island. Nearby (but a world away) is the tiny cove of Porth Dafarch, looking like it's straight off an episode of Poldark.

BENLLECH BEACH - many people have fond childhood memories of this beach and continue to bring their families here today. But that's exactly what Benllech is, a perfect family-friendly beach of soft sands, rockpools and gentle lapping waves.

RED WHARF BAY - walk round from Benllech when the tide is out to discover ten more miles of stunning shoreline, this is Red Wharf Bay. Beautifully wild, there's an array of animal- and plant-life here, plus unrivaled views of the North Wales coast.

NEWBOROUGH BEACH - most people come here on the way to Llanddwyn Island but it's an amazing place in its own right. The fine, sandy shoreline is fringed with aromatic pine forest (more than a touch of the Med here) and the views of Snowdonia are awesome.

CHURCH BAY - named after the church that overlooks it, this sand and shingle beach sheltered by towering cliffs is just remote enough to feel wild. It's not recommended for those with mobility issues as the only way down is by a steep path. Rhoscolyn - tricky to get to (down a winding, single track lane) but definitely worth the effort! A gorgeous sandy bay complete with rockpools and sand dunes, in close proximity to one of the finest gastro-pubs on the island, the White Eagle.

LLŶN PENINSULA

Blessed with more than 100 miles of coastline, the Llyn Peninsula is a place of contrasts. In the south you'll find the beaches of the 'Welsh Riviera', complete with miles of golden sand and safe waters. In the north, it's a more rugged affair. Towering cliffs, surf-trimmed bays and jagged coves, it's a beachcomber's paradise. If you love your beaches, two for one's not bad, eh?

ABERSOCH - known as Main Beach, this is a popular spot with sun worshippers, families and watersports enthusiasts. It gets really busy in high season. A great place for people watching or just watching the world go by, it's wonderfully sheltered with more than a touch of the Med about it.

MORFA NEFYN - halfway down the northwestern arm of the Llyn, it's a Mecca for watersports fans who love the challenging conditions between here and Porth Dinllaen 'next door'. You can walk from beach to beach along the sandy shore at low tide.

PORTH DINLLAEN - Nefyn's watery neighbour and home to one of the best pubs in the world, the oft-photographed Ty Coch Inn which is right on the beach. It's a small beach, tucked between steep headlands, it's a great spot for rock pooling or sun worshipping (drink in hand, naturally).

DINAS DINLLE - the northern most beach of the peninsula, it's a long shingle beach that stretches from the outskirts of Caernarfon onto the Llyn. Amazing views across Caernarfon Bay to Anglesey plus some interesting history nearby make a visit worthwhile.

PORTH OER 'WHISTLING SANDS' - the irregular shape of the sand grains actually make them squeak underfoot, giving this beach its nickname. Nestled between grassy headlands, it's a picturesque spot and the only beach of its kind in the UK - only one other beach in Europe can boast the same musical sand.

LLANBEDROG - the iconic rainbow-coloured beach huts of this delightful little beach make it a popular spot for photographers as well as day-trippers. It's a very sheltered spot too, making it ideal for all year round beachcombing expeditions.

PORTH NEIGWL 'HELL'S MOUTH' - great waves all year round lure surfers from near and far. But with a sand and shingle foreshore and a sandy shore, it's a really nice family beach too so you shouldn't be put off by the name!

ABERDARON - at the very tip of the peninsula, it's flat and sandy with active waves, making it a popular hang out with the surfing community. Mystical Bardsey Island can be spied in the distance and you can catch the boat across from the neighbouring bay.



SNOWDONIA

Backed by the mist-shrouded peaks of our National Park, the beaches of Snowdonia plunge down to meet the sea in a short but stunning stretch of dramatic coastline. With the waves at your feet and the mountains at your back, this is what North Wales is all about.

BARMOUTH - a pretty beach backed by steep hills and trimmed with stately Victorian villas. Like its counterparts on the North Coast it offers a traditional day at the seaside complete with candy floss, donkey rides, fine sand for castle building and amusement arcades. It's popular in high season but rarely overcrowded.

HARLECH - overlooked by the mighty Harlech Castle, this expansive sandy beach with dunes is a stunner. Walk for miles with just the gulls for company or have a 'proper' day at the beach, it's up to you. Walking or playing, you won't be able to tear your eyes from the views of Snowdonia either.

SHELL ISLAND - not strictly an island but a peninsula that is cut off from the mainland at high tide. It has three beaches, two excellent for bathing and a third that gives the island its name - it's littered with shells brought in on the tide making it perfect for the beachcombers among you.

MORFA BYCHAN 'BLACK ROCK SANDS' - named for the headland of dark-coloured stone that guards this flat, sandy beach and sand dunes. Vehicles are permitted to park on the beach, making it a popular spot for watersports fans as well as visitors, but it's massive so there's plenty of room for everyone.



BEST WATERSPORTS BEACHES

SURF'S UP - THE 5 BEST SURFING BEACHES

Did you know, North Wales is home to some of the best surf beaches in the UK? Beach bum or surf bunny. Even if you've never surfed before, several safe beaches and some excellent surf schools make learning fun.

1. PORTH NEIGWL 'HELL'S MOUTH', LLYN PENINSULA Not as scary as the name suggests! A pretty and clean beach with great surfing for beginners. Hell's Mouth has varying wave heights, so, depending on the conditions, it's suited to more experienced surfers too.

2. BARMOUTH, LLYN PENINSULA A beach for all seasons; there are always waves to catch here. Perfect for surfers looking to up their game and hone their skills. The constantly changing wind and wave directions make every session unique.

3. TRAETH LLYDAN, RHOSNEIGR, ANGLESEY A great spot due to its westerly direction (meaning it picks up 'swell' from the south-west), it's also really popular with a host of other watersports enthusiasts and gets very busy in high season.

4. PORTH OER 'WHISTLING SANDS', LLYN PENINSULA Whistling Sands is a fantastic venue for experienced surfers who can confidently handle rip tides and currents. The best time to visit is at high tide, when the breaks are best.

5. PORTH TRECASTELL 'CABLE BAY', ANGLESEY Cable Bay has some good-sized waves making it a popular spot with kayakers and body boarders too. Similar to Rhosneigr, when the weather conditions are just right, it attracts the crowds.

AIR APPARENT - TOP 5 BEACHES FOR KITESURFING

Across the region, there are several beaches with reliable winds where you can hop aboard, do your thing and enjoy some fantastic waves to boot.

1. TRAETH LLYDAN, RHOSNEIGR, ANGLESEY This popular beach has a variety of areas offering diverse wind conditions - from flat water to choppy waves - making it an ideal location for both novices and professionals.

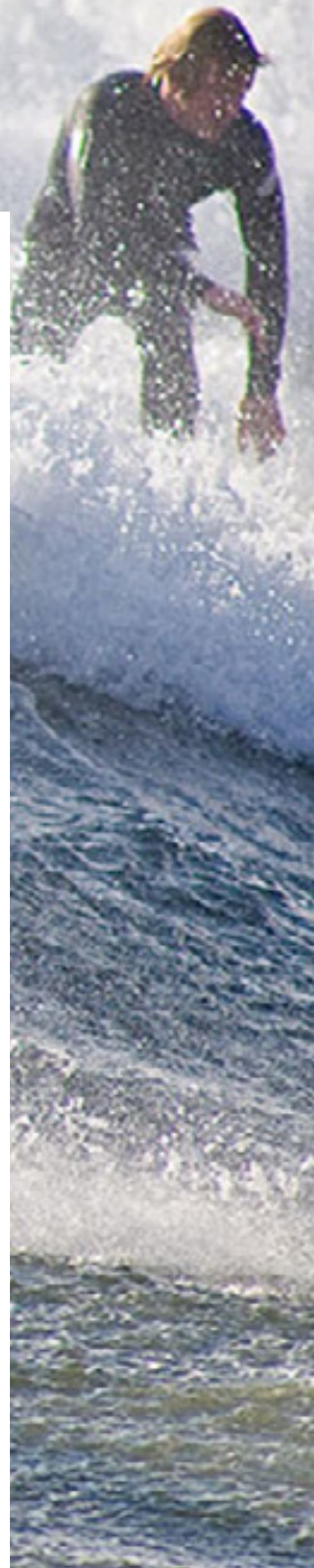
2. WEST SHORE, LLANDUDNO Something of a kitesurfer's Mecca, the West Shore has a variety of different waters and is infamous for tricky spring tides which will challenge any kitesurfer - novices beware.

3. KINMEL BAY, CONWY COUNTY Calm, flat waters make this the ideal place for beginners or those trying to master a new trick or technique. There's a friendly vibe and there's often a pro surfer about to offer advice on launching and landing. **NB** you must purchase a permit to kitesurf at Kinmel Bay.

4. PORTH OER 'WHISTLING SANDS', LLYN PENINSULA With some fantastic waves and swells, this is an exciting destination. Although kitesurfing is banned during the summer months, the sheltered bay will protect you from the harsh winter weather that hits the coast.

5. NEWBOROUGH BEACH, ANGLESEY There are waves for all levels on sandy Newborough Beach so whether you're a seasoned professional or still trying to get to grips with spinning and grabbing this spot is well worth the trip.

If you're the type who spends every free moment by the sea, what are you waiting for?





BEST WATER SPORTS BEACHES

ROLL WITH IT - TOP 3 PLACES FOR KAYAKING

For those who love kayaking, North Wales has an abundance of coast, coves and estuaries on which to practice your flips and spins... or maybe just take the slow boat and explore?

1. PORTH EIRIAS, CONWY COUNTY

This Blue Flag Beach offers an incredible kayaking experience and is popular with all ages and abilities thanks to its sandy foreshore and safe waters. Kayak hire and tuition are available here.

2. LLANDDYNWYD ISLAND, ANGLESEY

If you've got your own kayak, this is a great place to spend the day. Explore the coves of this romantic island and say hello to its residents, including seals and wild ponies. **NB** launch on a rising tide at Llanddwynd and avoid carrying your kayak a long way back to the car.

3. MAWDDACH ESTUARY, GWYNEDD

Easily one of the most stunning locations in Snowdonia, with views of Cader Idris and Rhinogs. If you're up for a challenge, head from Barmouth towards Dolgellau for a mixture of choppy and smooth conditions.

BAITING GAME - 3 GREAT SPOTS FOR SEA FISHING

The North Wales coast plays host to the World Shore Angling Championships in 2018. If you're a keen fisherman (or woman) what better excuse do you need to try out these world-class waters?

1. LLANDUDNO PIER, CONWY COUNTY

Llandudno is a popular fishing destination due to the variety of fish in the area, including pollock, mackerel, and dogfish. Make your way to the end of the Pier where there is a dedicated fishing platform. You must obtain a permit - visit the tackle shop at the Pier Gates.

2. PWLLHELI BEACH, GWYNEDD

Pwllheli makes for an interesting day's fishing. The harbour channel is home to a large quantity of bass but during the summer there is high boat traffic. Head down to the beach for black bream, dogfish, gurnard, and mackerel.

3. LLANFAIRFECHAN BEACH, CONWY COUNTY

Miles of shingle backed by the rolling hills of the Carneddau, plus spectacular views of Anglesey and Llandudno, make this a very special spot. On the end of the line bass, codling, plaice, whiting and mackerel... if you can tear your eyes from the view!

New to watersports? There are several schools in North Wales where you can have fun giving it a go with the help of the professionals. Check out **Adventure Activities** for our recommendations.

DOG-FRIENDLY BEACHES



TOP 5 DOG-FRIENDLY BEACHES

North Wales, like many other places in the UK, has a series of by-laws banning dogs from certain beaches in high season. From the 1 May - 30 September in Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Anglesey, and from 1 April - 30 September in Gwynedd, many of our most popular beaches become doggie no-go zones. The restrictions cover the seashore, the foreshore and any slope or staircase leading onto the beach. Failure to comply with the by-laws could see you being hit with a £100 on-the-spot fine

Here's our 5 favourite dog-friendly beaches where Rover is free to roam all year round.

1. POINT OF AYRE, TALACRE, FLINTSHIRE

Made famous by the 2011 Dulux paints advert, which saw the iconic sheepdog enjoying this sandy expanse of beach with Talacre Lighthouse in the background.

2. FFRITH BEACH, PRESTATYN, DENBIGHSHIRE

Four miles of flat, sandy beach along a popular stretch of coastline between Prestatyn and Rhyl. Perfect for dogs who love to run or play fetch!

3. CONWY MORFA, CONWY COUNTY

A long sandy bay, backed by windswept sand dunes; apart from other dog walkers and the occasional horse rider, it's rarely busy and the views are out of this world.

4. RED WHARF BAY, ANGLESEY

A really dramatic spot with a picture postcard village, we defy you not to fall instantly in love with Red Wharf. At low tide, ten miles of sandy beach reveals itself - perfect for pooches who love to run and run.

5. AFON WEN, PWLLHELI, LLYN PENINSULA

Like many beaches on the Llyn Peninsula, a long, straight stretch of sand and shingle with epic views along the Gwynedd coast and the Snowdonia National Park.

For full details of all dog-friendly beaches in North Wales click [here](#).

Food & Drink

We might not be known as a foodie nation but we Welsh take our food and drink very seriously. Staple cultural icons such as Welsh Rarebit and Bara Brith remain close to our hearts (closer to our stomachs) but Welsh food is so much more these days.

We're home to some of the finest local producers in the country, people who saw the rich soil, clear waters and fertile valleys of North Wales as perfect ingredients for cooking up their passions.

We've got more butchers, bakers and... microbreweries per square mile than you can shake a fork at and we're proud to have been chosen as home for several world-class eating establishments.

The biggest problem is not finding somewhere to whet your whistle or satisfy your appetite, it's choosing where to go and what to have!

From traditional holiday treats like fish and chips to sophisticated à-la-carte dishes, and naughty homemade cakes (go on, just one more slice) to meat that's gone from field to fork in days, North Wales is the foodie heaven you never knew existed... until now.

RESTAURANTS

CASTLE COTTAGE | *Harlech* - widely regarded as one of the best restaurants in North Wales by those in the know, serving delicious Welsh fare in stylish surroundings.

COCONUT KITCHEN | *Abersoch* - award-winning Thai restaurant, serving tasty oriental dishes made with the freshest local produce, including Aberdaron crab and Menai mussels - fusion food at its finest. 🍌

DYLAN'S | *Criccieth* - housed in a beautiful art-deco building-beside-the-sea, local dishes and seafood are cooked with the trademark Dylan's flair. Watch the sun go down over Criccieth Castle from the comfort of your chair.

DYLAN'S | *Llandudno* - overlooking the iconic North Shore Promenade, a bistro-style restaurant and cocktail bar with a stunning array of locally-sourced food and tipples in chic Grade II listed surroundings.

DYLAN'S | *Menai Bridge* - the original and many say the best, the Dylan's family started life right here. Sitting in the shadow of Thomas Telford's suspension bridge, the menu is a beacon for local food and drink.

ENOCH'S FISH & CHIPS | *Llandudno Junction & Valley* - the Enoch's ethos revolves around serving sustainably-farmed fish cooked with love and care. Sit-in for amazing daily specials or take-out and eat hot from the paper.

FISH TRAM CHIPS | *Llandudno* - family-run chippy at the foot of the Great Orme. Fish and chips cooked with secret recipe batter, grab a portion and eat them on the Prom - a proper seaside tradition.

FRECKLED ANGEL | *Menai Bridge* - sharing is caring at this up-and-coming little bistro where Spanish tapas and British flavours meet.

HAYLOFT RESTAURANT | *Tal-y-Cafn* - delightful, rustic restaurant where dishes are prepared with produce reared or grown on the Bodnant Estate, bringing a whole new meaning to 'locally-sourced'.

HOTEL PORTMEIRION | *Penrhyndeudraeth* - luxurious interiors combine with an architect-inspired exterior. The result is one stylish place to eat. Did we mention the view? Breathtaking. The food at this 2 AA Rosette restaurant's pretty amazing too!

BWYTY MAWDDACH | *Mawddach* - housed in a converted farm building, this contemporary restaurant serves simple food made special by using the boldest flavours and best seasonal produce.

OUZO & OLIVE | *Caernarfon* - Greek taverna, serving vegetarian and non-veggie Mediterranean-inspired dishes. Mention you're a vegan and they will do their best to accommodate you. 🍌

OYSTER CATCHER | *Rhosneigr* - with a menu embracing the best of British cuisine (not forgetting those ubiquitous oysters), this stunning beach house-inspired restaurant is just minutes from Rhosneigr's beautiful beach.

PIER HOUSE BISTRO | *Beaumaris* - right on the shore with uninterrupted views of Snowdonia and the Menai Strait, serving good food in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere.

PORTH EIRIAS | *Colwyn Bay* - Bryn Williams' popular bistro, boasting one of the best views of any restaurant anywhere! The menu shows off the best local produce and freshly caught seafood.

SIGNATURES | *Conwy* - award-winning fine dining restaurant in sumptuous surroundings; watch the culinary drama unfold in the theatre-style kitchen. Menus change depending on what's good and what's in season.

SOSBAN AND THE OLD BUTCHERS | *Menai Bridge* - the menu is a closely-guarded secret until you sit down and start your meal - it's all about the experience here. Book well in advance for this One Michelin Star restaurant.

THE BLUE SEAL | *Trearddur Bay* - serving food inspired by both the traditional pub and Spanish tapas - trust us, it really works! Fantastic selection of locally-brewed beers and an impressive gin menu.

THE LOBSTER POT | *Church Bay* - the fruits of the sea are given centre-stage at this homely restaurant overlooking gorgeous Church Bay. Served simply, the fish and seafood do the talking.

THE SEAHORSE | *Llandudno* - chef Don brings a passion for seafood to the Queen of Welsh Resorts. Patronised by loyal locals and celebrities alike, specials at this quaint restaurant change with the catch of the day.

TYDDYN LLAN | *Corwen* - this country house restaurant serves delicious hearty fare to a One Michelin Star standard, with the emphasis on fresh seasonal fare that's, above all, really good to eat.

SALT MARSH KITCHEN | *Tywyn* - relaxed and informal, this bistro-style restaurant serves local and seasonal food inspired by dishes from across the globe.

VENETIA | *Abersoch* - elegance on the plate is the order of the day at this stylish restaurant. The chef uses the best local produce to recreate his favourite Italian dishes, with a twist.

VOLTAIRE | *Bangor* - this vegan restaurant has built a passionate and dedicated fanbase across North Wales. We strongly advise booking owing to its popularity. 🍌

CAFES

ALPINE COFFEE SHOP | *Betws-Y-Coed* - a popular café at the heart of the village serving ethically-sourced, free-range food, it's a great spot to watch the world go by.

AMELIE'S | *Conwy* - tucked away on the high street this gorgeous little upstairs café is a slice of bohemian Paris in North Wales. A distinctly French menu prepared with wholesome Welsh produce equals a marriage made in heaven!

BAY CAFÉ | *Benllech* - quaint little café overlooking Benllech Beach, known for good value, hearty food. This place has a loyal following of locals and returning visitors.

BISTRO BACH | *Llandudno* - with a range of delicious dishes to tempt the most hearty of appetites, this friendly neighbourhood bistro is extremely popular with the locals - always a good sign.

BLACK CAT CAFÉ | *near Caernarfon* - a quaint café with a dedicated vegan menu and cakes to-die-for, this little gem will have you coming back for seconds. ♻️ 🌱

CABAN CAFÉ | *Llanberis* - well-known for belly-busting breakfasts and healthy lunches, this café is the ideal place to start or end your day in the mountains.

CAFÉ GLANDWR | *Beddgelert* - serves a selection of meat, vegetarian and vegan light-bites, including daily vegan, gluten-free and vegetarian specials. ♻️

CAFFI SAM | *Llanberis* - a fantastic selection of dishes catering for meat and non-meat eaters, including veggie, vegan, raw and gluten-free, it's a great spot for a pre- or post-hike bite to eat. ♻️ 🌱

CELL B | *Blaenau Ffestiniog* - quirky café, cinema and arts space in an old jailhouse, the emphasis here is on good food cooked well. Why not catch a movie while you're here?

COED-Y-BRENIN | *near Dolgellau* - café with panoramic views over the forest. A great place to stop and refuel after hitting the trails or to just enjoy a bite to eat.

FFIN Y PARC | *Llanrwst* - licensed coffee shop set in a country house with art gallery. Pop in to admire the art or relax and enjoy a 'panad' (a cuppa) in tranquil surroundings.

FLAT WHITE | *Colwyn Bay* - bustling café in the heart of Colwyn Bay, serving excellent coffee and cakes to tempt even the strictest dieter! Free Wifi and a relaxed atmosphere make it a great meeting place.

HAFOD ERYRI | *Snowdon* - if you're making the trip to the top of Snowdon, be it under your own steam or the train's, stop at the summit café for the ultimate brew with a view!

KYFFIN CAFÉ | *Bangor* - we're reliably informed the food here's not just tasty but good for the soul too. With a great selection of teas, coffees and freshly-prepared vegetarian dishes plus several vegan options. ♻️ 🌱

L'S COFFEE & BOOKS | *Conwy* - coffee and books, a match made in heaven and there's plenty of both here. It's very dog-friendly too so ideal for a cuppa after a long walk on Conwy Mountain or the Morfa.

LLYN BRENIG CAFÉ | *Cerrigydrudion* - with stunning views across the lake; wooden beams, floor-to-ceiling glass and a large balcony invite the outdoors in. A very welcome sight after a long bike ride!

MARRAM GRASS | *Newborough* - this relaxed and friendly bistro is one of the most popular eateries on Anglesey so we recommend booking in advance. Run by passionate foodie brothers, most ingredients are grown on site or sourced locally on the island. 🌱

MOSTYN GALLERY | *Llandudno* - a chic café serving a range of delicious light bites with many vegetarian and gluten-free options. Don't miss its famous Sunday roast (with a difference). ♻️

PETE'S EATS | *Llanberis* - a popular hub for climbers and hikers in the centre of Llanberis, think large portions and pints of steaming hot tea for weary travellers.

PROVIDERO | *Llandudno* - this hip coffee shop has completely reinvented café culture in Conwy County. The coffee is outstanding, the vibe chilled, the welcome friendly.

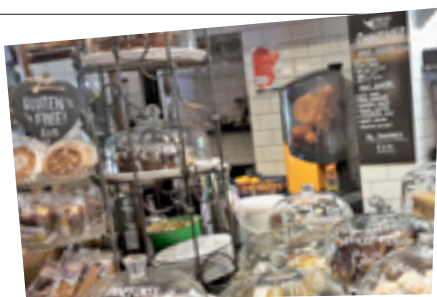
TIFFANY CAFÉ BAR | *Llandudno* - family-run Tiffany's has stood the test of time and is one of the most popular eateries in town. A varied menu, including a good selection of vegetarian options - large portions are a given! ♻️

TU HWNT IR BONT | *Llanrwst* - the Conwy Valley's iconic riverside tearooms, beloved of foodies and photographers alike. Go for the Welsh afternoon tea and try the scones, the recipe is a closely-guarded secret.

TY HYLL | *Betws-y-Coed* - expect more of the same wholesome home-cooked fare at Tu Hwnt i'r Bont's sister tearooms. The so-called Ugly House is a little beauty to us!

WATERSIDE CAFÉ | *Llandudno Junction* - excellent homemade cakes, fair-trade coffee and light bites, plus an ever-changing view across the RSPB Conwy nature reserve - you won't want to leave.

WEST SHORE BEACH CAFÉ | *Llandudno* - friendly staff serving delicious home-cooked food makes this a very special place. Oh, did we mention the views?



PUBS

ALBION ALE HOUSE | *Conwy* - an iconic Conwy watering hole with a reputation for championing the best local ales, ciders and beers. With a sunny beer garden, huge open fire and cosy snug - it's the ultimate pub! 🍷

ANGLESEY ARMS | *Menai Bridge* - amazing views of the Menai Suspension Bridge and delicious home-cooked food. The varied menu includes gastro-pub staples plus several imaginative vegetarian options. 🍷 🐾

BAR BACH | *Caernarfon* - claims to be the smallest pub in Wales. Is it? Who knows, but don't worry, they'll happily squeeze you in for a few pints of the local good stuff!

CROSS FOXES | *Dolgellau* - award-winning country pub nestled in the shadow of Cader Idris. The location makes it an ideal stop-off on a road trip or after a long day on the hill. 🍷

DINORBEN ARMS | *Bodfari* - after years of neglect, this much-loved country pub has been fully-restored and extended. Nestled next to the village church, it's an idyllic spot for a pint with stunning views of the Vale of Clwyd.

INN AT THE BAY | *Trearddur Bay* - smart and stylish pub serving contemporary food classics overlooking the bay. If the weather's good, grab a beach hut and eat with the best view on the island!

PENLAN FAWR INN | *Pwllheli* - dating back to the 16th century, this traditional pub in the heart of the town offers real Welsh hospitality, including local cask ales and home-cooked meals.

PEN Y BRYN | *Colwyn Bay* - large destination pub with a country-chic feel, serving a range of gastro-pub meals and light bites which change daily plus a good range of locally-brewed craft beers and spirits.

RHOS FYNACH | *Rhos on Sea* - medieval monastery-turned-inn on the seafront. Cosy bar and snug area with roaring log fire, extensive beer garden and even a crazy golf course - this is a really family-friendly pub.

THE BLACK BOY INN | *Caernarfon* - 500 year old inn offering traditional Welsh hospitality and award-winning food and drink. As a must-visit destination in historic Caernarfon, it's almost as popular as its imposing neighbour, the castle.

THE BLUE BELL | *Halkyn* - CAMRA Cider Pub of the Year 2017, this is the epitome of a 'proper' country pub. No fussy food here just real ales and stunning views across the Dee Estuary, what more can you ask for? 🍷

THE BULL'S HEAD | *Beaumaris* - with a choice of more than 100 craft beers and ciders and a reputation for fantastic food you'll be spoilt for choice, even down to where to sit - inside or out? Upstairs or down?

THE COTTAGE LOAF | *Llandudno* - a little slice of the country hidden behind the high street. The Loaf, as it's affectionately known, comes complete with quintessential roaring log fire and suntrap beer garden. 🍷

THE ERSKINE ARMS | *Conwy* - an imposing Georgian exterior concealing a quaint interior crammed with cosy nooks and crannies. Warm up by the fire in winter; bask in the courtyard in summer.

THE GOAT INN | *Glandwyfach* - gorgeous stone-built, traditional Welsh pub serving excellent home-cooked food (and lots of it). Booking advised, people travel from miles around to eat here.

THE GROES INN | *Conwy* - believed to be one of the oldest pubs in Wales, the Groes has been receiving guests since the 16th century. A friendly welcome, good food, stunning views and a convenient location explain its popularity!

THE KIMNEL ARMS | *St George* - multi-award winning country pub, most recently voted AA Pub of the Year 2017, serving a combination of à-la-carte and good old pub grub, not to mention an extensive wine, beer and spirits menu.

THE KING'S HEAD | *Llandudno* - the resort's oldest and, many would say, best pub. Adjacent to the tram station at the foot of the Great Orme, a great mix of locals and visitors makes for a lively visit anytime! 🍷

THE LIVERPOOL ARMS | *Conwy* - boasting the longest beer garden in Wales, it's one of Conwy's most iconic landmarks, after the castle and walls. Local brews and all the usual tipples served in one of the best locations anywhere. 🍷

THE SARACEN'S HEAD | *Beddgelert* - country pub complete with roaring log fire and a great selection of hearty food and drink. Beddgelert being home to the legendary hound, it's extremely dog-friendly too! 🍷 🐾



THE SEACROFT | *Trearddur Bay* - bustling pub-restaurant close to the Blue Flag beach. The place has a chilled-out beach house vibe and a tempting menu made with the best locally-sourced ingredients. 🍷

THE TAL Y CAFN | *Tal-y-Cafn* - historic coaching inn on the banks of the River Conwy recently renovated for 21st century tastes. Has a reputation for excellent food and service in stylish surroundings.

THE WHITE EAGLE | *Rhoscolyn* - a contemporary pub with views of the west coast of Anglesey, and a menu that showcases the best local produce and tipples including a daily specials board that changes with the seasons. 🍷

TY GWYN | *Rowen* - gorgeous olde-worlde inn on the historic coaching route from Holyhead to London (now the A5) with a reputation for excellent food in quaint surroundings. 🍷

TY NEWYDD | *Aberdaron* - seafront pub with glorious views over Aberdaron Beach. On the menu: seafood as fresh as it gets and a delicious carvery on Sundays - yum!

VAYNOL ARMS | *Pentir* - classic country inn with a menu chock full of pub grub favourites and a choice of eating and drinking areas, including a lovely beer garden with views towards Snowdonia. 🍷





WINE, BEER AND SPIRITS

ABER FALLS DISTILLERY |

Abergwyngregyn - distillers of single malt whisky, gin and liqueurs, in a range of delicious flavours that take inspiration from the epic landscapes of North Wales.

CONWY BREWERY | Colwyn Bay -

producing a range of bottled and cask ales, seasonal and small batch brews plus the year-round popular range of Conwy ales, including Welsh Pride and Clogwyn Gold.

GREAT ORME BREWERY | Llandudno -

one of the most established brewers of cask and bottled ales in North Wales with a loyal following and a great stable of ales, including Merlyn and Welsh Black.

GWINLLAN CONWY VINEYARD |

Llandudno Junction - thriving vineyard in the Conwy Valley, growing a variety of red and white grapes to produce several award-winning Welsh wines.

NORTH STAR DISTILLERY | Denbigh -

makers of Merywen small batch gin, distilled with water from the foothills of Snowdonia and botanicals foraged from the hedgerows surrounding the tiny distillery.

PANT DU | Caernarfon -

yet another award-winning vineyard where apples and grapes together enjoy the sunny slopes of the Nantlle Valley, creating a range of delicious wines, ciders and juices.

PURPLE MOOSE BREWERY | Porthmadog

- another well-established North Walian microbrewery, Mws Piws (to give it its Welsh name) is a 40 barrel small batch brewery with an impressive range of award-winning ales.

SNOWDONIA DISTILLERY | Tal-y-Cafn -

makers of Forager's Gin - Black and Yellow labels - distilled using pure mountain water and the finest Welsh botanicals, many gathered from the slopes of Snowdon itself.

WILD HORSE BREWING COMPANY |

Llandudno - American-style craft microbrewer that has taken the inspiration for its range from the wild mountain ponies that roam the Carneddau.

ICE CREAM

CADWALADER'S | *various outlets* - an ice-cream producer with a proud Welsh heritage. With parlours in Criccieth, Betws-y-Coed and Porthmadog, you don't have to go far to try a Cadwalader's cone.

FORTE'S | *various outlets* - one of the most established names in ice cream in North Wales, with their flagship ice cream parlour on Llandudno's high street.

GLASLYN ICES | *Beddgelert* - an award-winning local producer with a mouthwatering range of dairy and non-dairy ice cream flavours to choose from, eat-in or takeaway!

MON AR LWY | *Anglesey* - multi-award winning ice cream that can be sampled at some of the best restaurants and attractions in North Wales, including Dylan's, Surf Snowdonia and Penrhyn Castle.

NORTH WALES ICE CREAM WORLD | *Kinmel Bay* - you'll be spoilt for choice with 48 different flavours at North Wales' newest ice cream parlour at North Wales Garden World, near Rhyl.

PARISELLA'S | *Conwy* - an award-winning family-run business, with outlets in Llandudno's Happy Valley and hometown, Conwy.

PLAS FARM | *Anglesey* - Anglesey ice cream producers, Plas Farm, supply the region with their delicious varieties that include traditional ice cream and soft Mr Whippy.

RED BOAT | *Beaumaris* - Italian-style gelato ice-cream made with the finest Welsh ingredients is top of the menu at Beaumaris' most popular ice cream parlour.

THE LOOKING GLASS | *Llandudno* - from cones to crepes and milkshakes to monster sundaes, this Alice In Wonderland-inspired ice cream parlour takes the frosty dessert to a whole new level.

Y GEGIN FAWR | *Aberdaron* - this iconic 700-year-old building, whose names translates to 'the Big Kitchen', used to feed hungry pilgrims travelling to Bardsey Island.



FARM SHOPS

BODNANT FOOD CENTRE | *Tal-y-Cafn* - bringing the finest regional produce all under one roof, plus delicious meat, dairy and veg products grown on the Bodnant Estate.

BRYN CELYN FARM SHOP | *Dulas* - stocking a range of delicious locally-made Anglesey produce, including goods baked in the shop's country kitchen, rare breed pork and free-range eggs.

DOLWEN FARM SHOP | *Abergele* - selling lamb, pork and beef straight off the family farm plus chicken, burgers and homemade sausages, this is local Welsh food at its best.

GLASFRYN FARM SHOP | *Pwllheli* - selling a range of Welsh goods plus continental meats and cheeses, this farm shop prides itself on selling Welsh Black beef and lamb reared on the sprawling Glasfryn Estate.

HAWARDEN ESTATE FARM SHOP | *Hawarden* - with meat reared on the estate, including seasonal game and rare breeds, and fruit and vegetables deliciously in season, this farm shop has everything you need to fill a basket.

HOOTON'S HOMEGROWN | *Brynsiencyn* - known as the breadbasket of Wales, Anglesey produces some of the finest food and drink in North Wales, find it here straight from the Hooton's family farm.

MILL FARM SHOP | *St Asaph* - located in the very popular Tweedmill Shopping Outlet, supports local farmers and producers from the Vale of Clwyd and beyond. Home to award-winning local butcher, Glyn Davies.

RHUG ESTATE FARM SHOP | *Corwen* - organic farm shop selling high quality meat, dairy and baked goods plus a massive selection of sweet and savoury goodies from across Wales.



Events

JANUARY

Sleeping Beauty: the Rock 'n' Roll Pantomime - Mold *Until 20 January*

Theatr Clwyd hosts a panto with a difference, with over 16 classic rock and soul songs played live. From 'Superstition' to 'Wake Me Up Before You Go Go', you'll love the sets, gags and panto puppets.

Superheroes: The Legends of Today - Wrexham *Until 27 January*

Superman, Batman, Dr Who and Wonder Woman... believe it or not, Wrexham has a link to them all. Local artist Neil Edwards illustrates our best-loved heroes and his amazing work is exhibited here.

FEBRUARY

Catrin Finch - Mold *4 February*

World-class Welsh harpist, Catrin Finch, has won rave reviews for her virtuosic performances, with an impressive repertoire ranging from Bach and Debussy to traditional Welsh airs.

Nick Beer 10K Road Race - Llandudno, *11 February*

Started in 1993 in memory of local amateur runner Nick Beer, the race takes in iconic Llandudno landmarks, the Promenade and the Great Orme.

Welsh International Culinary Championships - Rhos on Sea *13-15 February*

With fantastic culinary displays, compelling talks and fierce competition, this fabulous foodie event will make your tummy rumble and inspire you with new ideas.

Banff Mountain Festival Tour (Red) - Llandudno *16 February*

The annual adventure film festival hits the UK with brand new films from some of the world's most incredible adventurers. Part one of two (see April listings).

Cambrian Rally - Llandudno & Ruthin *17 February*

This world-class rally returns to North Wales to tackle four stages with a ceremonial start and finish on Llandudno Promenade.



Rhyl 10 Mile - Rhyl *24 February*

Designed to aid runners in reaching their ten mile personal best, this flat fast course along the North Wales coast is sure to be a hit.



MARCH

Wrexham Marathon Festival - Wrexham *11 March*

Full and half marathons, a 20 miler and a fun run make up this exciting day of running, expect the people of Wrexham to turn out in droves to support runners over the line.

Ladbrokes Players Championship Snooker - Llandudno *19-25 March*

For the fourth consecutive year, the best snooker players on the planet converge on Llandudno to compete in one of the UK's most celebrated tournaments.



Conwy Seed Fair - Conwy *26 March*

Flowers and plants, seeds, home produce and local craft stalls descend on the medieval town to celebrate an ancient annual tradition.

APRIL

Wales International Harp Festival - Caernarfon 1-7 April

The 2018 event celebrates the 90th birthday of legendary harpist, Dr. Osian Ellis CBE. As part of the festivities, there will be concerts, competitions, beginners lessons, lectures and more.

Banff Mountain Festival Tour (Blue) - Llandudno 14 April

The annual adventure film festival hits the UK with brand new films from some of the world's most incredible adventurers. Part two of two (see February listings).

1940's Festival - Colwyn Bay 21-22 May

Step back in time to the good old days at this celebration of all things Forties - music, displays, reenactments and activities for all ages, plus special guests stars.

MAY

Machynlleth Comedy Festival - Machynlleth 4-6 May

A weekend of comedy in the historic market town, celebrating all that's good about life - with big laughs, great beer and a fantastic musical line-up guaranteed.

Llandudno Victorian Extravaganza - Llandudno, 5-7 May

Celebrating the town's rich Victorian heritage, the annual extravaganza sees vintage funfair attractions, costumed revellers and great entertainment descend upon the stately seaside town.

Llandudno Transport Festival - Llandudno, 5-7 May

Held on the same weekend as the Victorian Extravaganza, this festival of vintage transport is one of the largest gatherings of transport enthusiasts in the UK.

FOCUS Festival - Wrexham 10-12 May

FOCUS showcases more than two hundred bands from across the world on twenty stages, and hosts a full schedule of interactive industry workshops, comedy, arts events, and film screenings.

Prom Xtra - Colwyn Bay, 12 May

Large scale annual family event with tons of free activities to keep you busy, including face-painting, fairground rides, live music performances and circus entertainment.



© Conwy Borough County Council

Conwy Real Ale Trail - Conwy, 12 May

Follow the trail from Llandudno to Conwy Marina, stopping at eight pubs and Conwy's first micro brewery on the way, to sample up to 50 of the finest local brews.

Anglesey Vintage Rally - Anglesey 19-20 May

Gala rally showcasing vintage machinery in all its glory. expect to see everything from steam rollers and motorbikes, to cars and agricultural machinery.

Snowdonia Half Marathon - Llanrwst 20 May

Considered the UK's toughest half marathon, this event starts and finishes in the quaint village of Llanrwst, which played host to the World Trail Running Championships in 2013.

Snowdonia Slateman Triathlon - Llanberis 20-21 May

Are you tough enough? This challenging trail triathlon comprises of a 1,000m open water swim, a 51km road ride on dizzying mountain roads, and an 11km trail run through Snowdonia's slate quarries.

Aberystwyth Cycle Festival - Aberystwyth, 25-27 May

Britain's top cyclists will get in the saddle for a gala celebration of cycling that includes town-centre criterium racing, downhill mountain biking and a mass participation ride.

JUNE

Festival of Gardens North Wales - various locations, 2-17 June

In its third year, this popular celebration of all things horticultural returns to North Wales. With over 20 of the region's finest gardens - public and private - taking part and a host of special events and activities, it's a must for anyone with green-fingers.

Caerwys Agricultural Show - Caerwys 9 June

Flintshire's leading agricultural event, showcasing the best of the county's food, drink, livestock and produce.

Pirate Weekend - Conwy, 16-17 June

Pirates and swashbucklers take over the town for one weekend of watery fun, so grab your cutlass and celebrate the Year of the Sea in style.



National Armed Forces Day - Llandudno, 30 June

The seaside resort will play host the 10th national Armed Forces Day, an opportunity to salute the forces that serve and protect our country: from serving troops to service families, and veterans to cadets.

Snowdonia Challenge - Snowdonia National Park, 29 June - 1 July

The only event of its kind in the UK, the Snowdonia Challenge is a test of mental and physical resilience and team work that will take you on a journey of self discovery. Walk one hundred kilometres in just three days!

Llangollen Classic Transport Weekend - Llangollen 30 June- 1 July

An extravaganza of classic transport descends on Llangollen by road and rail for one weekend only. Travel back in time with a cavalcade of classic cars, buses, trains and motorbikes.

JULY

International Eisteddfod - Llangollen 3-8 July

One of Wales' best-loved cultural traditions, the International Eisteddfod is a celebration of music from all over the globe, with incredible performances from orchestras, singers, choirs, poets and dance groups.

Glass Butter Beach Festival - Abersoch, 13-15 July

Back after a break! This funky festival is all about creativity, beach lifestyle and world-class wakeboarding. With international music acts and a bohemian vibe, it's the coolest event this summer.

Llandudno Jazz Festival - Llandudno 27-29 July

Three days of world-class jazz in the beautiful surroundings of Bodafon Farm Park on the outskirts of Llandudno.



Llangollen Fringe Festival - Llangollen 19-29 July

With concerts that start early in the day and continue into late at night, this festival is a marvellous celebration of music of all genres, and from all around the world.

AUGUST

Conwy River Festival - Conwy TBC

Enjoy messing about on the water? Join in with this week-long celebration of maritime activities, plus plenty of onshore entertainment for landlubbers.
conwyriverfestival.org

Headstock Festival - Llandudno various dates August

In the last few years, Headstock has become a much-loved event by locals. A month of weekend live entertainment, the atmosphere is electric with BBQ food and great views.

Anglesey Show - Anglesey TBC

This annual gathering is one of the biggest fixtures on the island's social calendar. Animals and livestock competitions, dazzling displays, a plethora of exhibitors plus great opportunities for shopping and eating.
www.angleseyshow.org.uk

Eglwysbach Show - Eglwysbach 11 August

Speed Sheep Shearing Contests, Heavy and Light Horses, Poultry, Flowers, Vegetables, Handicrafts, Donkey Rides, Tractors and Classic Machinery, Trade Stands, Fairground, and art exhibitions, phew! This event is a fun-packed day out with something for everyone!

Denbigh & Flint Show - Denbigh 16 August

Agricultural show taking place in the glorious Vale of Clwyd; everything you would expect of a county fair and so much more.



Llanrwst Show - Llanrwst 18 August

A great day out for the whole family, this county fair at the heart of the Conwy Valley, is a truly community affair that attracts visitors from far and wide each year.

North Wales Cricket Festival Rhos on Sea 27-30 August

Two leading teams tackle each other head on in a Four Day Specsavers County Championship Fixture at Colwyn Bay Cricket Club.

SEPTEMBER

Man vs Mountain - Caernarfon 1 September

This legendary mountain race starts at sea level, takes you up Snowdon and dives into Dinorwic Quarry where you'll encounter punishing obstacles, including the infamous Vertical Kilometre!

Scifi Wales - Llandudno 1 September

North Wales' premier science fiction event and gaming, featuring celebrity guests, panel talks, traders, cosplay, competitions, photo opportunities and much more.

Beaumaris Food Festival - Beaumaris 1-2 September

The village green fills with marquees and gazebos and there's a holiday atmosphere in the air. This annual food fest offers a tantalising taste of the very best Welsh and British produce.

Festival No. 6 - Portmeirion 6-9 September

This award-winning boho-chic event has gone from strength to strength in the last few years. Much more than just a music festival, there are workshops, visual arts entertainment and all sorts of quirky family fun to get involved with.



Gladfest - Hawarden 7-9 September

The UK's friendliest literary festival in its only residential library. Bringing together award-winning, internationally-renowned writers, this unique meeting of minds is all about author talks and bookish conversation.

Conwy Honey Fayre - Conwy 13 September

By Royal Charter, this fair has been taking place every year for over 700 years. Local beekeepers, stallholders and producers set up stall in the town to share their love of all things bee.

The Good Life Experience - Hawarden 14-16 September

Family-friendly and full of fun, this festival hosts global music acts but also encourages us to better embrace the world around us. Everything from tree climbing and woodcraft, to sustainable living and sushi workshops.

LLAWN06 - Llandudno 14-16 September

A free arts festival, celebrating and exploring Llandudno through art, music, comedy, performance and participation. Taking place all over the town in unusual spaces and surprising places!

Cambrian Coast Sportive - Snowdonia 15 September

Billed the most beautiful ride in the UK, this cycle road race climbs mountains, skim lakes and makes heady descents through ancient woodland. Choose from several routes depending on your proficiency.

Mold Food Festival - Mold 15-16 September

A huge selection of delicious regional food and drink, plus celebrity and local chef demonstrations, interactive cookery workshops, producer showcases and live music.



North Wales International Music Festival - St Asaph 15-29 September

Classical music lover or new to the genre? This annual festival welcomes all kinds of classical fans, with top-names performing in the auspicious surroundings of St Asaph Cathedral.

Gorjys Secrets - Conwy September TBC

A magical day of music and festivities on a country house estate in the North Wales countryside, showcasing some of the finest singer songwriters from Wales and the UK. www.gorjys.com

OCTOBER

Llangollen Food Festival - Llangollen 13-14 October

Better known as Hamper, this renowned food festival features the big guns of the culinary industry. With talks from world-renowned chefs, demonstrations from the industry and opportunities to eat your fill, the emphasis is on getting involved!

World Shore Angling Championships - Conwy County 20-27 October

The Welsh Federation of Sea Anglers bring the world's top shore anglers to Conwy for the very first time to compete in the 35th World Championship for Men and the 26th World Championship for Ladies.

Wales Rally GB - Conwy County 25-28 October (TBC)

With a gala opening and finish, and taking place over four days, world-class drivers race against the clock for the fastest time. Each day divided into a number of 'Special Stages' tackling some of North Wales' most gruelling terrain.

Gwledd Conwy Feast - Conwy 27-28 October

The perfect autumn event, this annual festival celebrates the thriving food culture of North Wales. With delicious regional food and drink, great live music and amazing night-time displays, the whole family will enjoy it.



NOVEMBER

International North Wales Choral Festival - Llandudno 3-4 November

With a variety of categories including, Barbershop, Youth, Ladies and Mixed Voice, this annual festival of song is in its 3rd decade and well-known for its friendly and welcoming atmosphere.

Llandudno Christmas Fayre - Llandudno 15-18 November

Christmas markets have swept the nation in recent years and Llandudno's has firmly established itself as one of the best small markets in North Wales. More than 130 food, drink and craft stalls to browse, plus a packed daily schedule of seasonal entertainment.



DECEMBER

Nadolig Llawen - Betws-y-Coed **30 November-2 December TBC**

Annual Christmas takeover weekend in this lovely alpine village. With a packed schedule of seasonal events, if this doesn't get you in the festive spirit, nothing will!

Portmeirion Christmas Market - Porthmadog **30 November-2 December TBC**

Over 100 Christmas chalets selling a range of handmade North Walian goods, plus live music, a Christmas grotto and cookery demonstrations.

Conwy Winterfest - Conwy **8 December TBC**

Medieval mayhem combines with festive late 'knight' shopping for one night only. On street entertainment plus a torch-lit procession make this a very atmospheric event.

Surf Snowdonia Christmas Market - Dolgarrog **8-9 December TBC**

Festive food and drink, a range of craft stalls selling unique gifts, a visit from Santa and a spectacular waterside setting; it must be one of the most picturesque markets in Wales!

A Penrhyn Christmas - Bangor **various dates December**

Step back in time and join the residents of Penrhyn Castle - above and below stairs - to celebrate Christmas the old fashioned way. Music, wreath making, crafts and a visit from Santa are just a few of the things you can expect.

Christmas on the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways - Blaenau Ffestiniog **various dates December**

Join Santa and his elves for a trip along the line! For children, a chance to meet the man in red and receive an early Christmas gift. For adults on the 'Nice List', a glass of sherry and a mince pie.



Our guide is just a flavour of what to expect on your next trip to North Wales

If you need more information or inspiration visit the **website** to find out more.

Our **Blog** will give you some brilliant ideas for days out, plus the inside track on everything that's happening in North Wales.

Our comprehensive **Things To Do** page gives you all the information you need to plan great days out.

Finally, our Cottages page showcases our range of stunning properties. With everything from cosy cottages and quaint farmhouses, to cool coastal retreats and sophisticated townhouses, we guarantee you'll find a holiday property to suit you perfectly.

Has our guide left you wanting more?

More adventure?
More amazing food and drink?
More history?
More unforgettable experiences?

You can have all this and more when you book your next stay with North Wales Holiday Cottages, all you need to do is choose your perfect property. And to get you started, here's a selection of our holiday cottages, we defy you not to fall in love with them.

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