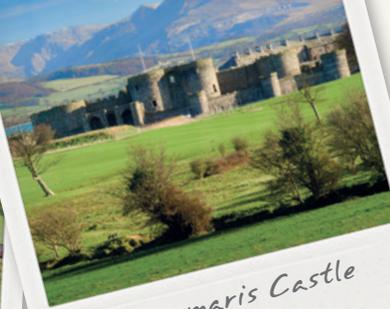




Llangollen International
Music Eisteddfod



Ffestiniog Railway



Beaumaris Castle

North Wales

Day 1

On arrival in Wales, head for the small town of **Llangollen**, it nestles between the Berwyn Mountains and the River Dee. It has been made famous by the annual July festival 'Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod' established after the Second World War to encourage peace between nations. Look out for **Castell Dinas Brân**, a hill overlooking the town. With a ruined castle at the top. It is rumoured that The Holy Grail is buried here.

There's plenty to do. Visit the timber framed building **Plas Newydd**, take a horse drawn trip along the Llangollen Canal, wander around the streets with gift and craft shops or look for The Holy Grail! A bit further afield walk along the UNESCO World Heritage Site of **Pontcysyllte Aquaduct** that carries the Llangollen Canal 38m above the River Dee Valley or visit the ruins of Valle Crucis Abbey.

Approx distance: 33 miles / 52 km

Approx driving time: 45 mins

Overnight suggestion: Betws y Coed, the official 'Gateway to Snowdonia'.

Day 2

Visit **Llechwedd Slate Caverns**, and take a tour underground to discover what life was like as a Victorian Slate Miner. There are two tours to choose from, the deep mine or the miners tramway.

Afterwards take a ride on the **Ffestiniog Railway**, historically it took the slate down to the coast. It has just been extended to travel through the Snowdonia National park to Caernarfon. This is a steam railway and is one of the Great Little Trains of Wales.

Stroll around Caernarfon and visit **Caernarfon Castle** which was inspired by imperial Constantinople. Caernarfon Castle's appearance is unashamedly intimidating.

The lure of water and easy access to the sea make the banks of the River Seiont an ideal spot for Edward I most ambitious building project. In 1969 the investiture of the current Prince of Wales took place at Caernarfon Castle and today it is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Approx distance: 65 miles / 105 km

Approx driving time: 1hr 45 mins

Overnight suggestion: Return to Betws y Coed for overnight stay.

Day 3

Head along A5 and the scenic Nant Ffrancon Pass to the **Island of Anglesey**, where Prince William of Wales and Catherine Middleton (Duke & Duchess of Cambridge) enjoyed their early married life. So, cross the historic **Menai Suspension** bridge designed by Thomas Telford in 1826, it opened up the historic route between London and Dublin.

The first stop today is a photo opportunity at the railway station with the longest place name "Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwllllantysiliogogoch". Afterwards a quick shop at the James Pringle Weavers next door.

Next is a visit to **Beaumaris Castle**, it's one of the Castles that make up the 'Iron Ring' and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It was the last and largest of King Edward I's Welsh fortifications and is a perfect example of a concentrically planned castle. However, by 1298 money and supplies ran out before the fortifications reached their full height so, this is why it looks a bit short!

Continue to onward journey.

You may choose to stay longer and combine a North Wales and South Wales itinerary. Don't forget that you can fly from Cardiff to Anglesey and vice versa in just over an hour with City Wing Airline www.citywing.com Please note that there are no services on weekends or bank holidays. www.angleseyairport.com

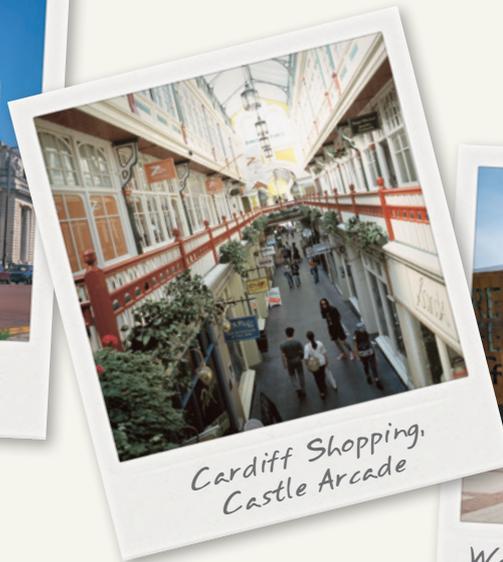
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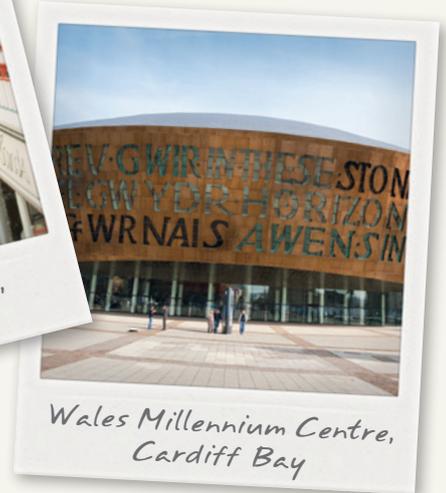
Millennium Stadium,
Cardiff



National Museum,
Cardiff



Cardiff Shopping,
Castle Arcade



Wales Millennium Centre,
Cardiff Bay

South Wales in 3 days

Day 1

Cardiff is a modern and cosmopolitan Capital city. What's really great about Cardiff is its size; it's compact; almost everything you want to see is within walking distance or a short drive away so you won't be wasting your time getting around. Listed below are some suggested places to visit, so mix and match as time and preferences allow.

The Civic Centre is often referred to as The Washington DC of Europe, thanks to its White Portland Stone Buildings. This is where the **National Museum** can be found that tells the story of Wales from earliest times and is unique among British museums and galleries for its range of art and science displays. It houses the finest collection of impressionist buildings outside Paris, including Monet's, Manet's and Renoir's paintings.

Cardiff Castle is located in the heart of the city and enjoys a history spanning nearly 2000 years. The highlight at the castle is a guided tour of the spectacular castle apartments. They were created in the 19th century by eccentric architect William Burges for the very rich Third Marquess of Bute. Designed as a medieval fairytale home, the rooms are filled with ornate fireplaces, gilded ceilings, intricate stained glass and carved and painted animals throughout.

Wales Millennium Stadium was built for the 1999 Rugby World Cup and is now a major sporting and concert arena. A behind the scene tour is a great introduction to the Welsh love of rugby and to find more out about the stadium.

The St Davids 2 Shopping Mall opened in 2009 and has elevated Cardiff to 6th in the UK shopping league. There's the largest John Lewis Department Store outside London that sells many of the global designer labels as well as the other high street stores. Nearby is a maze

of the Victorian Arcades that house many of Cardiff's individual and unique shops.

Situated in the heart of Cardiff Bay, is the vibrant waterfront area. The **Wales Millennium Centre** has already established its reputation as a unique and lively performing arts centre. More than just a theatre, visitors come from all over the world to enjoy performances ranging from blockbuster West End musicals, Welsh National Operas, Ballet and stand up comedy, book before your visit to see tonight's performance or take a behind the scenes tour of the centre.

Or why not try **The Doctor Who Experience**, the first ever interactive Doctor Who exhibition that invites visitors to star in their very own Doctor Who adventure.

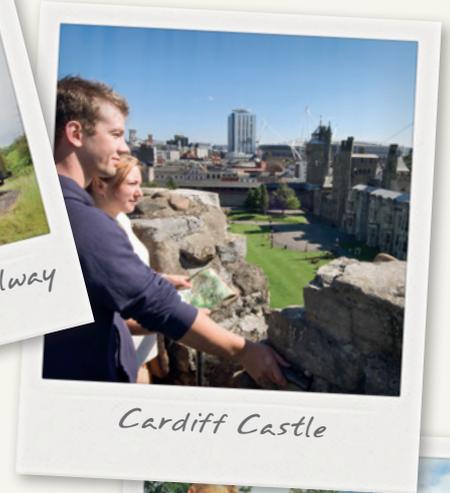
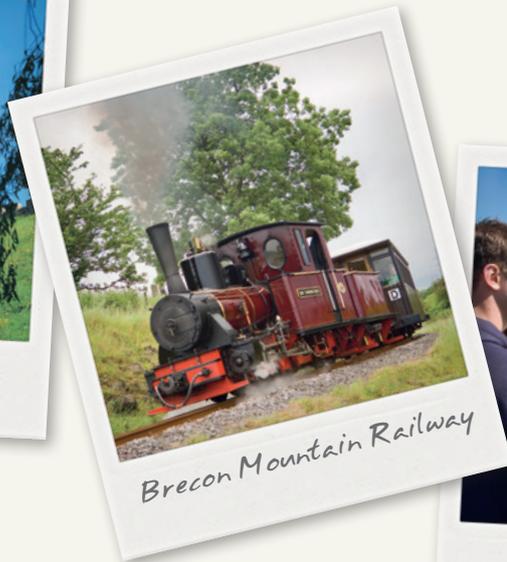
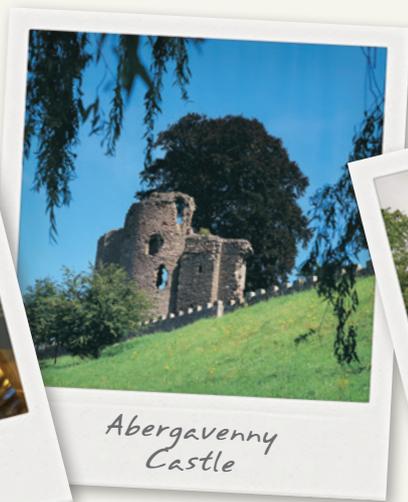
Tonight there's a choice for dining, enjoy a **Cardiff Castle Banquet**, take a boat ride to Cardiff Bay and sample one of the many restaurants by the waterside or check out one of the city centre restaurants.

Overnight suggestion: Cardiff

Day 2

Visit the National History Museum at **St Fagans**. It's one of Europe's leading open-air museums and Wales' most popular heritage attraction. It stands in the grounds of the magnificent St Fagans Castle, a late 16th-century manor house donated to the people of Wales by the Earl of Plymouth. Surrounding it are over 40 buildings that have been reconstructed from sites all around Wales.

Drive Northwards towards Merthyr Tydfil and take a steam train ride on the **Brecon Mountain Railway**. It's one of the 'Great Little Trains of Wales' that travels through the Southern Brecon Beacons National Park and along the full length of the Taf Fechan Reservoir.



South Wales in 3 days – continued

Either visit **Penderyn Distillery** – it opened its doors to visitors in June 2008 with the launch of its new purpose designed and built Visitor Centre. The distillery is the only one in Wales and the first to legally distill whisky spirit in the country for more than 100 years.

Meet the distillery team for a tour that will take you on a journey through the history of single malt whisky making in Wales, and understand the distilling and bottling process at first hand.

Or continue to **Abergavenny**, and take afternoon tea at The Angel Hotel, it has been awarded the best place for afternoon tea outside London.

Approx distance: 34 miles / 54.2 km

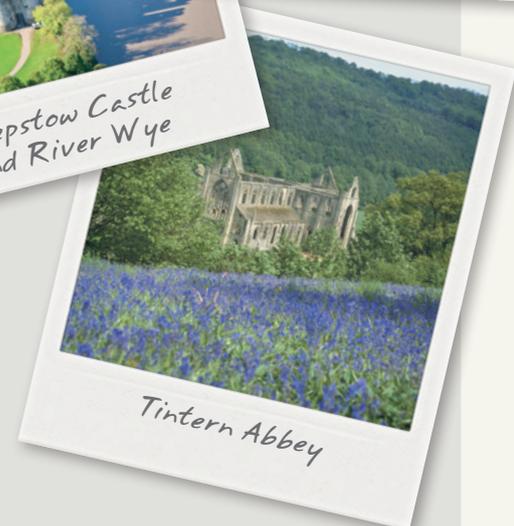
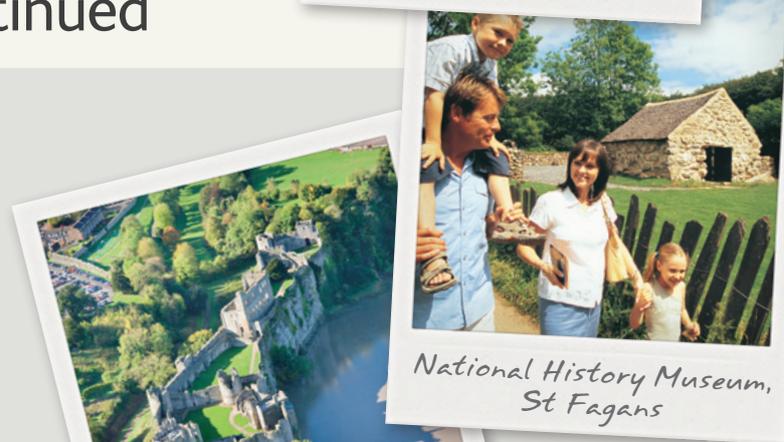
Approx driving time: 55 mins

Overnight suggestion: Cardiff and chose another evening option as detailed in day 1.

Day 3

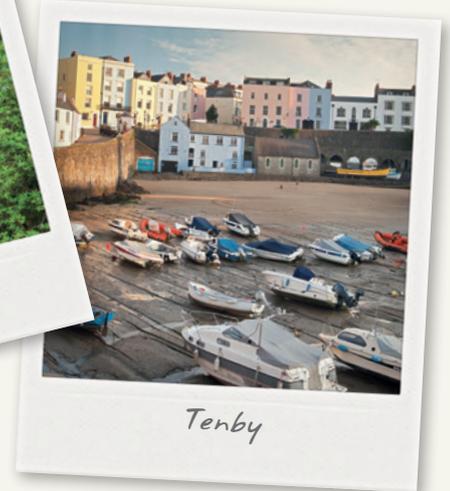
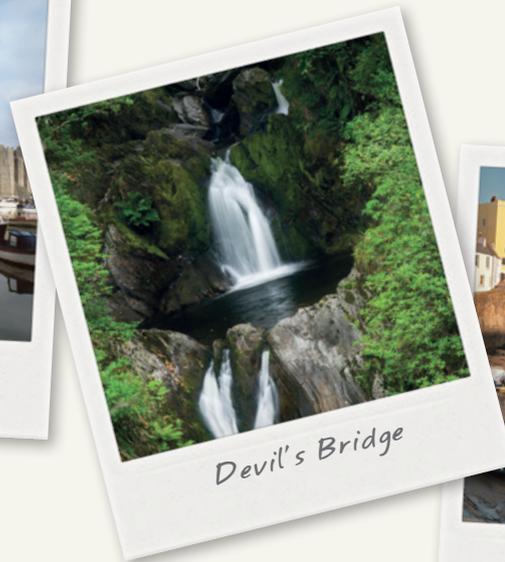
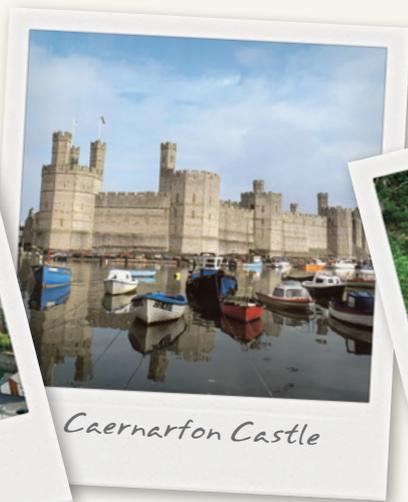
Visit **Chepstow Castle**. It is a Norman castle perched high above the banks of the River Wye in southeast Wales. Construction began in 1067, less than a year after William the Conqueror was crowned King of England. It is one of the earliest stone-built castles in Britain. The castle was modified and developed in successive stages throughout the Middle Ages and saw further action during and after the Civil War.

If time permits, visit the **Wye Valley**, it's an 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' and visit the village of Tintern. There are lots of gifts and craft shops to buy Welsh souvenirs and also visit the ruins of **Tintern Abbey**, before the onward journey.



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Wales in a week

Day 1

Make your first stop in **Llangollen**. It's an ancient market town situated on the banks of the beautiful River Dee under the watchful gaze of **Castell Dinas Brân**. If you're not lucky enough to be here for the **International Musical Eisteddfod** held each July, there's plenty to explore in its narrow streets.

Head to **Conwy** and to its **castle** – a great place to get lost. It has plenty of ramparts, towers, dark passages and dungeons. While you're in Conwy pay a visit to **Plas Mawr**, a restored Elizabethan townhouse and don't miss Britain's **Smallest House**.

Approx distance: Llangollen to Conwy 49 miles / 78.8 km

Approx driving time: 1 hour 15 minutes

Overnight suggestion: Conwy, Caernarfon

Day 2

Start by heading south to **Caernarfon Castle**, a World heritage listed site. It's arguably the finest in Wales. Murder holes, five gates, six portcullises and a moat make for formidable lines of defence.

The Llanberis Road takes you past the foot of Snowdon, the highest mountain in England & Wales. Sir Edmund Hillary and his team trained here before embarking on their journey to the summit of Everest. If you stop at the **Pen-y-Gwryd Hotel**, you'll see their signatures on the bar's ceiling.

Make sure you stop in **Harlech** and visit one of the '**Iron Ring Castles**'. Situated high upon a rocky outcrop, its seaward side was defended by sheer cliffs, while a deep moat protected the other sides.

Visit **Aberystwyth** on your way south along the coast. It's a lively University town, and also home to

the **National Library of Wales** – where many of the greatest literary treasures of Wales (and the other Celtic countries) are securely stored.

Approx distance: Conwy – Caernarfon – Harlech – Aberystwyth 114 miles / 183.5 km

Approx driving time: 3 hours 15 min / 3 hours if starting in Caernarfon

Overnight suggestion: Aberystwyth

Day 3

A worthwhile detour inland takes you to **Devil's Bridge**, situated high in the foothills of the Plynlimon Mountains, 19 km east of Aberystwyth. The village has three claims to fame: the three bridges, the little narrow gauge **steam railway**, and the cascading waterfalls of the river Mynach.

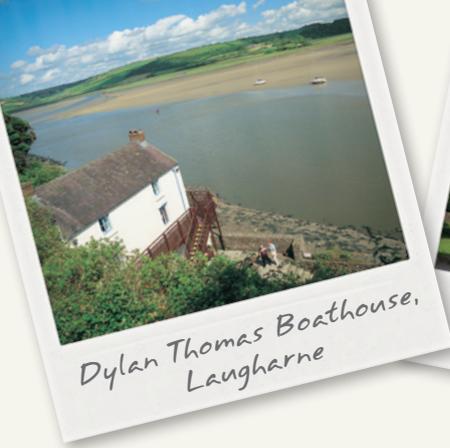
The west coast is dotted with award winning beaches, rocky smugglers' coves and great cliff-top scenery. If you get close enough to the water, you may even catch a glimpse of the resident dolphins and seals.

Keep going south into **Pembrokeshire**. There are plenty of great places to visit in this area. Don't miss:- **St Davids**: the smallest city in Britain, more like a small village. This place is special, stuffed full of little art shops, galleries and tea rooms. And of course a **cathedral**. **Tenby**: wedged between two massive sandy beaches, it has a castle, town walls, a tiny harbour, and the best sand in Wales for making sandcastles.

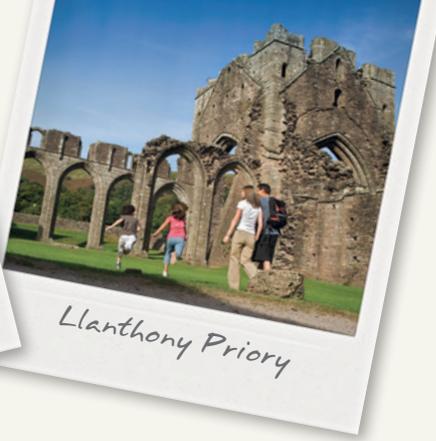
Approx distance: Aberystwyth – Devil's Bridge – Pembrokeshire 112 miles / 180 km

Approx driving time: 2 hours 30 minutes

Overnight suggestion: Tenby



Dylan Thomas Boathouse,
Laugharne



Llanthony Priory

Wales in a week – continued

Day 4

Take the coastal drive to **Laugharne**, where Dylan Thomas wrote 'Under Milk Wood'. You can still see his **writing shed** overlooking Carmarthen Bay.

Then drive towards Llanelli and the **Millennium Coastal Park** which occupies approximately 20 km of coastline on the Burry Estuary, overlooking Gower. It's a centre for lots of different leisure activities, including the continuous traffic-free cycle/footpath, championship golf course and watersports centre. The **National Wetlands Centre of Wales** is also located in the park. It's Wales' best place to see wildfowl and waders.

Approx distance: Tenby to Llanelli 58.5 miles / 94 km

Approx driving time: 1 hour 35 minutes + 25 minutes if overnight at Swansea

Overnight suggestion: Llanelli, Swansea

Day 5

Explore **Swansea** and **Gower** today. The city's oldest building is the ruined **Swansea Castle**, standing out in more modern surroundings near the shopping centre. At the **Dylan Thomas Centre** you will find an intriguing exhibition on the poet's life and work. Just a few minutes walk from the city you'll find Swansea's Maritime Quarter. The former docklands have been redeveloped into an attractive waterfront, with its 600-berth marina as a centerpiece. The **National Waterfront Museum** is the place to learn about the industrial, maritime and social history of Wales and it's free.

Next, head to Gower. You'll soon find out why the 29 km long peninsula was designated UK's first **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**. Visit open moors, grazed common land, salt marshes and beautiful beaches. There's also many historic churches, castles and prehistoric burial sites to explore. The **Gower Heritage Centre** based around an 800 year-old water powered mill, with craft workshops and tearooms is worth a visit.

Approx distance: Swansea to Gower 8 miles / 12.9 km

Approx driving time: 20 minutes

Overnight suggestion: Swansea

Day 6

At **Rhondda Heritage Park** in the South Wales Valleys, ex-miners will take you to the pit bottom to explore the mine and experience life underground.

Continue north to **Cyfarthfa Castle**, set in 158 acres of parkland, in Merthyr Tydfil. There's lots of fine decorative art to admire in the museum and art gallery's Regency rooms. Find out about social and industrial history in the atmospheric basement.

Your next stop is the **Brecon Mountain Railway**, just three miles north of Merthyr Tydfil. These little, tall-stacked steam engines will take you on a seven mile trip through superb scenery in the **Brecon Beacons National Park**.

Approx distance: Swansea to Abergavenny including stops 75 miles / 120.7 km

Approx driving time: 2 hours 15 minutes

Overnight suggestion: Abergavenny

Day 7

Make your way to the quaint market town of **Crickhowell**. Allow time to explore the town as it's a delight for quirky shopping. The social hub is **The Bear Hotel**, an ancient coaching inn dating back to 1432 which has twice won the Best Pub in Britain award.

Your last stop is **Hay-on-Wye**. If you choose to take the slower scenic route to Hay then stop at **Llanthony Priory** en-route. Hay-on-Wye is famous for one thing – books. There are millions of them, and they are everywhere. The castle's a book shop, the cinema's a book shop, the fire station's a book shop, the alleyways are book shops. It also hosts an annual **festival** in May/June and has placed the town well and truly on the world literary map.

Approx distance: Abergavenny to Hay-on-Wye including stops 37.5 miles / 60.3 km

Approx driving time: 1 hour 45 minutes

Overnight suggestion: Hay-on-Wye