

# TOURING HOLIDAYS ITINERY

## (3 touring holidays)

## EXPERIENCING WALES



### Experiencing Wales

#### 10 Day Tour

Betws-y-coed, Bodnant Gardens, Snowdonia, Conwy, Llandudno, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Porthmadog, Caernarfon, Llanberis, Snowdon, Museum of Slate, Dinorwig Quarries, Portmeirion, National Library of Wales Aberystwyth, Cardiff, National History Museum St Fagans, National Museum of Wales, Caerleon, Big Pit - Blaenafon, Llancaiach Fawr, Rhondda Valleys, Cardiff Castle, Cardiff to London, Wye Valley - Tintern Abbey, Lunch in London.

#### 10 day tour Itinerary

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##### Day 1:

Afternoon: Arrive at Manchester Hotel for our overnight stay.

Evening: Dinner followed by welcome and short introductory talk.

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##### Day 2:

Morning: Transfer to Betws-y-coed. We begin our tour with a visit to Bodnant Gardens in the care of the National Trust. There will be time to explore these delightful gardens full of plant species from many parts of the world. This is a wonderful landscape that is enhanced by its location overlooking the mountains of Snowdonia.

Afternoon: The medieval town of Conwy with its superb castle and complete town walls. The castle was one of the ring of fortifications built by Edward 1 in the late 13th century as part of his invasion into Wales. We will spend time in the castle and walking the complete ring of the town walls. From the towers there are good views of the town and the surrounding countryside including the estuary of the River Conwy spanned by two spectacular bridges. We will also explore the narrow streets of the town and visit St Mary's Church with its fascinating graveyard memorials. There will be free time to wander at leisure through the town.

Evening: Arrive at our hotel at Betws-y-coed. Dinner followed by a talk introducing Wales.

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Day 3:

Morning: Free morning in Betws-y-coed. There will be an optional (no extra charge) walking tour of the town lasting about 1.5 hours.

Afternoon: Travel to the elegant seaside town of Llandudno. High above the town is a massive outcrop of limestone called the Great Orme. We climb via a funicular tramway to visit the Bronze Age Copper Mines where we will walk through the passages and chambers excavated by hand using rocks and animal bones over 5,500 years ago. This is a fascinating insight into the way our ancestors exploited the copper and manufactured highly sophisticated bronze axes.

Evening: Dinner

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Day 4:

Morning: This day we find out about the story of slate. Before departure from our hotel there will be a talk on the history of the industry thence to Blaenau Ffestiniog to catch the famous narrow gauge steam powered railway to Porthmadog.

Afternoon: We travel via the historic town of Caernarfon to walk around the outside of the great castle before moving on to Llanberis located at the foot of Snowdon on the highest mountain in Wales and England. The town is now a thriving tourist area and was once also famous for its huge slate quarries. We will be visiting the Museum of Slate that is run by the National Museum of Wales. In the preserved workshops of the great Dinorwig Quarries we will see how massive slabs of slate rock were split and dressed to produce the high quality roofing material.

Evening: Dinner followed by an evening of traditional Welsh harp music and close harmony singing.

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Day 5:

Morning: Today we transfer from our hotel in North Wales to travel across Wales to Cardiff, the capital city. Our journey is broken by a visit to the fairytale Italianate village of Portmeirion that was the location for the 1960's cult television series The Prisoner.

Afternoon: Lunch will be taken in the National Library of Wales at Aberystwyth and followed by a tour of the library to view some of the treasures of Wales including ancient books and a superb collection of paintings.

Evening: Arrive at our hotel in Cardiff in plenty of time before dinner which will be followed by a short introductory talk on the area.

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Day 6:

Morning: The morning will be spent in the internationally acclaimed museum of National History at St Fagans on the outskirts of Cardiff. Here in the form of preserved buildings and other collections, the story of the people of Wales is told. Buildings from all parts of Wales have been re-erected here and this is an opportunity to find out more how people lived in the past.

Afternoon: After lunch the afternoon is free in the capital city with its outstanding Victorian and Edwardian architecture and to visit the National Museum of Wales. The network of covered shopping arcades is one of the many qualities of this busy cosmopolitan city. We offer an optional (no charge) walking tour of the city that will last approximately 1.5 hours. This is a good way to find out where to go and what to see before finding out more for yourselves.

Evening: Dinner.

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Day 7:

Morning: Today we experience a breadth of history beginning with a visit to the Roman amphitheatre and barracks at Caerleon. Excavations have revealed this to be one of the most important Roman bases in Britain.

Afternoon: This afternoon will be spent at the award-winning museum at Big Pit, Blaenafon located in the middle of a World Heritage Landscape. This was once working coal mines and we will descend deep below the ground to explore the former workings. There is much to see above and below ground at the museum and there will be time for you to travel across this amazing landscape of former quarries and coal and iron workings.

Evening: Our evening meal will be followed by a visit to hear an authentic Male Voice Choir practising.

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Day 8:

Morning: A short distance from Cardiff is Llancaiach Fawr where we will step back in time to 1645 when the Civil War in Britain was happening. The house is populated by actors who recreate life at the time through their speech, work and lifestyles. Crossing the threshold is like entering a time machine.

Afternoon: We spend the afternoon exploring the valleys (including the famous Rhondda Valleys) of south Wales looking at their explosive growth in the 19th and 20th centuries. We will be stopping and finding out more about the landscapes past and present.

Evening: Our final evening in Cardiff is spent at the extraordinary, flamboyant Victorian Cardiff Castle built by one of the richest men in Britain in the 19th Century. We will be entertained during a medieval banquet complete with singers, musicians and typical food for this period in time.

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Day 9:

Morning: Today we transfer from Cardiff to London travelling via the romantic Cistercian Tintern Abbey in the heart of the lovely Wye Valley. It was here that people like J.M.W. Turner and William Wordsworth were inspired to create their enduring visual and written images of the buildings and the landscape.

Afternoon: After a leisurely lunch we travel to London for our final overnight stay.

Evening: Dinner.

# EXPERIENCING NORTH WALES



## Experiencing North Wales: 7 Day Tour

Betws-y-coed, LLangollen, Bodnant Gardens, Snowdonia, Conwy, Penmon Priory, Bangor, Porthmadog railway, Caernarfon castle, Museum of Slate, Llandudno, Portmeirion.

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### 7 day Itinerary

#### Day 1:

Afternoon: Arrival and registration at hotel in Betws-y-coed.

Evening: Dinner followed by welcome and short introductory talk.

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#### Day 2:

Morning: This morning will be spent in historic Llangollen, home of the annual International Eisteddfod that attracts competitors worldwide. There is much to see in and around the town and we will be visiting Plas Newydd, one time home of Lady Eleanor Butler and Miss Sarah Ponsonby, “the two most celebrated virgins in Europe” who moved there in 1780. Their guest list was impressive and they played host to many famous travellers. Lovely gardens surround the house.

Afternoon: After lunch we embark on a horse drawn narrow boat for a trip along the Llangollen Canal that runs through the really beautiful Vale of Llangollen. This is a wonderful, peaceful way to view the countryside and place of interest at leisure. The trip terminates after crossing the magnificent Pontycysslite aqueduct that carries the canal in cast iron through 1000’ long supported on slender pillars 127i high. It was the brainchild of the great 18th/19th century engineer Thomas Telford. Travelling over it is a breathtaking experience.

Evening: Dinner followed by a talk on the area.

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#### Day 3:

Morning: Our day begins with a visit to Bodnant Gardens in the care of the National Trust. There will be time to explore these delightful gardens full of plant species from many parts of the world. This is a wonderful landscape that is enhanced by its location overlooking the mountains of Snowdonia.

Afternoon: The medieval town of Conway with its superb castle and complete town walls. The castle was one of the ring of fortifications built by Edward 1st in the late 13th century as part of his invasion into Wales. We will spend time in the castle and walking the complete ring of the town walls. From the towers there are good views of the town and the surrounding countryside including the estuary of The River Conway spanned by two spectacular bridges. We will also explore the narrow streets of the town and visit St Mary' Church with its fascinating graveyard memorials. There will be free time to wander at leisure through the town.

Evening: dinner.

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Day 4:

Morning: Remote on the coast of Anglesey is the 6th century religious site of Penmon with its priory that dates from the 10th century and the holy well and cell of St. Siroi. This is one of those very special places that retains a great sense of peace and quietude. As a contrast we spend time in the medieval town of Beaumaris with its splendid concentric castle. Here we will experience a complete contrast when we explore the chilling 19th century jail complete with its totally soundproofed and pitch black Punishment Cell and working treadmill.

Afternoon: After lunch we visit the town Courthouse that has been recreated to show a 19th century trial. Here we will get an idea of the strict regime of laws and punishment. We then travel to Bangor on the mainland recrossing high above the treacherous Menai Straits. In the centre of the town is the ancient cathedral that was founded seventy five years before Canterbury. Our tour will be preceded by a talk on its history.

Evening: Before dinner this evening there is the option (no charge) of a short walking tour around Betws-y-coed.

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Day 5:

Morning: This day we find out about the story of slate. Before departure from our hotel there will be a talk on the history of the industry thence to Blaenau Ffestiniog to catch the famous narrow gauge steam powered railway to Porthmadog.

Afternoon: We travel via the historic town of Caernarfon to walk around the outside of the great castle before moving on to Llanberis located at the foot of Snowdon the highest mountain in Wales and England. the town is now a thriving tourist area and was once also famous for its huge slate quarries. We will be visiting the Museum of Slate that is run by the National Museum of Wales. In the preserved workshops of the great Dinorwig Quarries we will see how massive slabs of slate rock were split and dressed to produce the high quality roofing material.

Evening: dinner.

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Day 6:

Morning: High above Llandudno is a massive outcrop of limestone called the Great Orme. We climb via a funicular tramway to visit the Bronze Age Copper mines where we will walk through the passages and chambers excavated by hand using rocks and animal bones over 5,000 years ago. This

is a fascinating insight into the way our ancestors exploited the copper and manufactured highly sophisticated bronze axes.

Afternoon: After lunch there will be free time to explore the elegant seaside town of Llandudno with its marvellous Victorian and Edwardian architecture and parks and gardens. A long pier reaches out into the sea from which there are superb views of the coastline and sweep of beach and promenade. Running parallel with the seafront is the main shopping street.

Evening: dinner followed by an evening of traditional Welsh harp music and singing.

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Day 7:

Morning: Our last morning together we visit the fairytale Italianate village of Portmeirion that was the location for the 1960s cult television series "The Prisoner".

Afternoon: After lunch we say goodbye and bon voyage.

# EXPERIENCING SOUTH WALES



## Experiencing South Wales: 7 Day Tour

Tywi Valley, Llandeilo, National Botanical Garden for Wales, Castell Henllys, North Pembrokeshire, Aberglasney Gardens, Pilgrims Church - Nevern, St Fagans on the outskirts of Cardiff, Blaenafon, St. David's Cathedral, Swansea - Llancaiach Fawr Manor, National Museum of the Woolen Industry, Dylan Thomas Centre, Laugharne.

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### Day 1:

Afternoon: Arrive at Swansea Hotel for our six night stay.

Evening: Dinner followed by welcome and short introductory talk.

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### Day 2:

Morning: We spend today visiting the famous gardens in the Tywi Valley near Llandeilo. We begin by visiting the National Botanic Garden for Wales that covers 568 acres that were formerly the landscape grounds of a large estate. The focal point is the award winning massive glasshouse full of exotic and rare plants from many parts of the world. The Botanic Garden is a marvellous place to spend time examining the wide range of plant species and animal and bird habitats. There will be time to explore these delightful gardens full of plant species from many parts of the world.

Afternoon: Our next garden is Aberglasney which is really a story of inspiration and vision. After being abandoned for fifty years the garden has been restored to their former glory including a very old yew tunnel and parapets and cloisters. Inside the partly restored house is the Ninfarium, a unique indoor garden. Our final stop is the glorious landscape of Dinefwr on the outskirts of Llandeilo. In the care of the National Trust this glorious landscape has associations with the Prince of Wales and Launcelot 'Capability' Brown.

Evening: Dinner followed by a talk on the area.

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### Day 3:

Morning: This day we travel to the far west of Wales. Our first stop is at Castell Henllys in North Pembrokeshire. Here the National Park Authority have recreated an Iron Age settlement in all its detail on the site of an excavated fort. With the detailed explanation provided by the site guide who is an archaeologist, the life and hierarchy of Iron Age Society comes alive.

Afternoon: After lunch we visit the Pilgrims church at Nevern. Dedicated to the Celtic monk St Brynach this is a place that resonates with history. Alongside the church is one of the best examples of a carved Celtic cross with its intricate, interlocking pattern of knots and links. Inside and outside the church are the famous Ogham stones with their Latin and runic inscriptions. Our final stop is the tiny city of St. Davids with its cathedral dedicated to the patron saint of Wales. this is an extraordinary place with its rich history and superb architecture. There is so much to see here including the Choir ceiling and the decorated misericords - seating for the clergy during long services.

Evening: Dinner.

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Day 4:

Morning: The morning will be spent on a guided tour of the internationally acclaimed museum of National History at St. Fagans on the outskirts of Cardiff. Here, in the form of preserved buildings and other collections the story of the people of Wales is told. Buildings from all parts of Wales have been re-erected here and this is an opportunity to find out more how people lived in the past.

Afternoon: After lunch the afternoon is free in the capital city with its outstanding Victorian and Edwardian architecture and to visit the National Museum of Wales. The network of covered shopping arcades is one of the many qualities of this busy cosmopolitan city. We offer an optional (no charge) walking tour of the city that will last approximately 1.5 hours. This is a good way to find out where to go and what to see before finding out more for yourselves.

Evening: Dinner followed by an evening of Welsh harp music and singing.

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Day 5:

Morning: The morning will be spent at the award-winning museum at Big Pit, Blaenafon located in the middle of a World Heritage Landscape. This was once a working coal mine and we will descend deep below ground to explore the former workings. There is so much to see above and below ground at the museum and there will be time for you to travel across this amazing landscape of former quarries and coal and iron workings.

Afternoon: On our way back to Swansea is Llancaiach Fawr Manor where we will step back in time to 1645 when the Civil War in Britain was happening. The house is populated by actors who re-create life at the time through their speech and explanations of their forbearers work and lifestyles. Crossing the threshold is like entering a time machine.

Evening: Dinner followed by a talk on the origins of the Welsh language as well as its colourful culture.

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## Day 6:

**Morning:** Deep in the heartland of rural Carmarthenshire is the National Museum of the Woolen Industry where the story of textiles is told in an engaging and informative way. There is a working mill and shop right in the complex.

**Afternoon:** The afternoon we spend in the historic, estuary located in the town of Laugharne. It is full of delightful Georgian and Victorian architecture, a fascinating Norman castle that was later converted into a manor house in the 16th Century. Laugharne was the home of Dylan Thomas, the famous 20th century Welsh writer and partly inspired his famous play Under Milk Wood. We will explore the town on foot discovering much about its history and traditions - every three years they celebrate the 'beating of the bounds' walking about 20 miles to mark the town and borough boundaries. An event that demands plenty of refreshment stops courtesy of the local brewery.

**Evening:** We stay in Laurgharne for our supper, taken in a local pub where there is a chance to meet the locals before being entertained by a locally based mixed choir in the Nonconformist chapel.

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## Day 7:

**Morning:** Our final day we spend the morning exploring the city described by Dylan Thomas as "smug-suburbed by the side of a long and splendid-curving shore." Our walk ends at the Dylan Thomas Centre.

**Afternoon:** After a leisurely lunch we wish you goodbye and 'bon voyage'.