



From  
**€8,669** EUR

Single Room

€10,007 EUR

Twin Room

€8,669 EUR

Prices valid until  
30th December 2024

**17 days**

Duration

**Wales**

Destination

**Level 2 - Moderate**

Activity

## Tour of Wales

Sep 18 2024 to Oct 04 2024

## Tour of Wales

Join Odyssey Traveller on this tour of Wales, an unforgettable travel experience through varied landscapes from the south to the north and back, travelling on the coast overlooking the Irish Sea and through picturesque Welsh villages, some of which date from the Middle Ages.

This small group tour for mature-aged and senior travellers of up to 16 travellers who are typically couples or friends travelling together or solo travellers offers diverse experiences and scenery, from a relaxing railway ride to a hike up the highest peak in South Wales. We will visit medieval villages, castles, and abbeys with knowledgeable local guides



Tour of Wales

<https://www.odysseytraveller.com>

20-Apr-2024

in order to gain insight about Welsh history.

This 17-day tour begins and ends in Cardiff, the capital and largest city of Wales, and is a combination of guided tours and free time so you can explore the charming towns at your own pace. We will spend nights in several Welsh cities, towns and villages:

- Cardiff is the capital of Wales, surrounded by beautiful scenery at its location on the Bristol Channel at the mouth of the River Taff. From its historical humble beginnings as a Roman fort and small town throughout the middle ages, the city has developed significantly over the last 200 years playing a key role in Welsh history as an industrial center. Today modern Cardiff continues to serve as the country's center of commerce and the prime hub of cultural, political and media institutions.
- Llanelli is a coastal town situated on the northern bank of the Loughor River, on the Bristol Channel, Wales. Established as a small village in the 600's, it is today the largest town in the county of Carmarthenshire with a long association with mining industries, especially as the world's biggest producer of tinplate. With the gradual decline of the town's heavy industry in the 1970s, the natural environment of parks and wetlands has since been regenerated into diverse and flourishing attractions.
- St Davids is a historic city located within the stunning Pembrokeshire Coast National Park near the tip of St Davids Peninsula, the most westerly point in Wales. The smallest city in Great Britain, consisting of four streets that meet in the ancient marketplace Cross Square, it has more of a charming feel like that of a large village. Yet despite its small space, as the birthplace of St David, the patron saint of Wales, the city holds a vast amount of history waiting to be explored.
- Aberystwyth is a small ancient market town and stunning seaside resort in Ceredigion on the west coast of Wales. Established as a castle town in the Middle Ages, the town has developed over the centuries first into a major port, then a centre of culture and education in Wales and famous for its Edwardian architecture and scenic coastal railway. Today it is a popular sea-side holiday



destination attracting tourists to relax within its picturesque scenery and at its numerous hotels, cafes, restaurants, bars and pubs.

- Beaumaris is a seaside community and former county town of the island of Anglesey, Wales. The site is famous for the Beaumaris Castle, Edward I of England's architectural masterpiece built from 1295 to protect his territorial gains in the region. The fascinating castle is a UNESCO world heritage listed site considered to be one of the most significant and sophisticated surviving examples of medieval military architecture.
- Llanbaris is a lakeside village in Gwynedd, northwest Wales, on the southern bank of Llyn Padarn at the foot of the magnificent Snowdon, the highest mountain in Wales. The area has a long history spanning back 1000 years, initially as the location of a strong defensive castle for native Welsh princes, and later as an industrial centre for slate mining. Today it is an attractive tourist location and centre for outdoor activities, renowned for its beautiful scenery that can be explored via hiking, mountain biking, pony riding, or amazing railway trips.
- Llangollen is a small market town in Denbighshire, North Wales. It is renowned for its tumbling river and surrounding hills, situated on the south bank of the River Dee in the narrowest stretch of the Dee Valley, to be enjoyed via railway train journeys, boat trips, and motor passes. Visitors can also travel back in time by exploring historic sites such as Castel Dinas Bran, Valley Crucis Abbey, and the Plas Newydd estate. In addition, one can experience a range of pleasant cafes, bars, hotels, restaurants, guest houses, and cottages, as well as frequent festivals.
- Shrewsbury is a large market town, the county town of Shropshire, England, located 9 miles (14 km) east of the Welsh border. The town has an impressive history, with a medieval street plan that is largely unspoiled and over 660 historically listed buildings to admire. Significant architectural interests include the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century timber-framed houses, a number of Georgian and Regency houses, the stained glass of St Marys church, and the old buildings of Shrewsbury School (1552), now





in use as a library and museum.

- Crickhowell is a small market town in South Wales, located in the beautiful Usk Valley, to the south of the Black Mountains within Brecon Beacons National Park. The town is a popular tourist location from which to experience the scenery of Brecon Beacons and partake in enjoyable outdoor activities such as hiking, mountain-biking, rock climbing, fly-fishing and more. While a tour of Crickhowell itself reveals a range of attractive ancient sites that tell of the town's interesting history from a castle settlement to picturesque town.

## Tour Highlights

### Explore the Many Castles of Edward I.

Wales had enjoyed a cultural and political autonomy ever since the 8th century Offa's Dyke geographically separated the Britons of the west (Wales) from the Germanic tribes of the east (England). Wales itself consisted of several kingdoms at the time of the Norman Conquest.

In 1216, Llewelyn ap Iorwerth of the Welsh kingdom of Gwynedd was recognised as overlord by the other Welsh rulers, and in 1218 he was acknowledged by the English crown. In Welsh chronicles, he is described as the "Prince of Wales". His grandson, Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, who marched into the lands controlled by Norman barons, was also recognised as such.

They would be the last Princes of Wales, as England's Edward I decided to go to war. In 1284, England annexed Wales, turning it into an English colony. Edward I had castles built to guard his new territories, but to also clearly communicate the power of English rule. These castles in Wales formed Edward's chain of fortifications called the Ring of Iron.

We will visit the grandest of these castles: Caernarfon Castle, **Beaumaris Castle**, and **Conwy Castle**.



## Architectural Gems

Wales' rich history leaves a landscape dotted with architectural gems that survive to this day. We will explore **Cardiff Castle**, situated within beautiful parkland and originally a Roman fort, expanded by rulers through the centuries.

St Davids in South Wales is the United Kingdom's smallest city in terms of population, a cathedral city that was the final resting place of Wales' patron saint, St David, and an important pilgrimage site in medieval Wales. We will explore **St Davids Bishop's Palace**, an immense medieval palace that dates from the 13th century and is adjacent to the city cathedral.

We will take a boat cruise down the **Llangollen Canal** through beautiful countryside, via the amazing 18-arched **Pontcysyllte Aqueduct**, completed in 1805. Also in Llangollen, we will experience a ride on the **Llangollen Railway**, the only standard gauge heritage railway in North Wales. Opened in 1975, this is a 10-mile restoration of a longer line that originally reached Llangollen town in 1865.

We will also visit treasures dating from the 11th and 12th centuries: **Shrewsbury Castle**, a red sandstone castle that was founded in 1070, **Shrewsbury Abbey**, founded in 1083, and **Valle Crucis Abbey (Valley of the Cross)**, founded in 1201 and one of Wales' best-preserved abbeys.

## Natural Wonders

We'd be remiss not to spend some time appreciating Wales' incredible natural scenery. We will visit Llanberis, located at the foot of majestic Mt Snowdon and the centre for outdoor activities in the Celtic heartland of Snowdonia. We will experience this outdoor beauty on the Lon Las Peris walk, a section of which takes you by beautiful **Llyn Padarn**, a glacially formed lake in Snowdonia. We will visit Bala Lake, also called **Llyn Tegid**, the "Lake of Serenity", the largest natural lake in Wales.

On this tour, we will be walking a portion of the Millennium Coastal Path and enjoy a view of the **Gower Peninsula**, designated as the UK's first



Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty back in 1956, and remains breathtaking to this day.

We will take a scenic drive from St Davids to Aberystwyth along the dramatic Welsh coastline. We will walk through the heart of the Brecon Beacons mountain range and walk up to **Pen y Fan** (“the top peak”), the highest peak in South Wales.

For more details, click the ‘Top 5’ or ‘Itinerary’ buttons above! If you’re keen to experience this tour, please call or send an email. Or, to book, simply fill in the form on the right hand side of this page.

## Other Odyssey Tours

This tour of Wales is only one of many tours of Britain for mature-aged and senior travellers offered by Odyssey Traveller. Click through to see our other offerings departing in 2020.

If you’re keen on walking more in Wales, consider joining our tour Exploring Wales on Foot, departing in August 2020.

## Articles published by Odyssey Traveller to assist you on your visit to Wales

The following list of articles published by Odyssey Traveller for mature aged and senior travellers to maximise their knowledge and enjoyment of Britain when visiting:

- History of Wales
- Traveller’s Guide to Medieval England
- Lumps and Bumps: How to Read the British Landscape
- Life in the Medieval British Village
- Victorian England Rural Life

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- [New Discoveries About Britain's Stone Circles](#)
- [Dry Stone Walls: An Alternative History of the British Isles](#)
- [British Village Icons: Pubs and Cottages](#)
- [Roman Roads in Britain](#)

## External Articles to assist you on your visit to Wales

- [This Is Why Wales Is One of the Most Beautiful Places in the World](#)
- [Wales Travel](#) (Lonely Planet)
- [Wales.com](#)
- [Visit Wales](#)
- [World Heritage List](#)
- [Ten books about Walking in Britain from the Guardian](#)
- [UNESCO World Heritage sites of Britain](#)
- [Neolithic Britain](#) (British Museum)
- [Guide to Neolithic Britain](#) (Country File)
- [History: Middle Ages](#) (BBC)
- [An Introduction to Medieval England](#) (English Heritage)
- [The top 9 UK countryside breaks for 2018](#) (Country Living)
- [21 Most Beautiful Villages in the UK](#) (Travel Away)
- [These are the top 10 most picturesque towns, villages and cities in England](#) (House Beautiful)

Odyssey has more information on [Wales](#) you could research.

## Highlights

Tour of Wales

<https://www.odysseytraveller.com>

1. Visit the grandest castles of Edward I's ring of fortifications in north Wales: Caernarfon Castle, Beaumaris Castle, and Conwy Castle.
2. Walk a portion of the Millennium Coastal Path and enjoy a view of the Gower Peninsula, designated as the UK's first Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
3. Walk through the heart of the Brecon Beacons mountain range and walk up to Pen y Fan ("the top peak"), the highest peak in South Wales.
4. Take a boat cruise down the Llangollen Canal through beautiful countryside, via the amazing 18-arched Pontcysyllte Aqueduct
5. Experience a traditional steam train ride on the Llangollen Railway, the only standard gauge heritage railway in North Wales.

## Itinerary

### Day 1

**Locations:** Cardiff

**Overview:**

We make our own way to our Cardiff accommodation. In the evening we will meet together as a group for our welcome dinner with the Odyssey Program Leader at a local restaurant. (D)

**Accommodation:**

Jury's Inn Cardiff or similar

### Day 2

**Locations:** Cardiff - Rhossili - Llanelli

**Overview:**

Cardiff is the capital of Wales and its largest city, and a popular tourist destination due to its archaeological and modern sights. After breakfast, we will explore the city on a guided tour, viewing its main attractions, including a visit to **Cardiff Castle**. Cardiff Castle is situated within



beautiful parkland and was originally a Roman fort, expanded by rulers through the centuries.

From Cardiff, we will travel to Llanelli. En route we will stop to view the southwestern tip of the **Gower Peninsula** in Rhossili. The Gower Peninsula was designated as the UK's first Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty back in 1956, and remains breathtaking to this day. (B)

**Accommodation:**

Stradey Park Hotel or similar

**Day 3**

**Locations:** Llanelli - St Davids

**Overview:**

Llanelli was once the world's centre of tinplate production, home to the Llanelli Steel Works (later Duport), established in 1898 and which closed its doors in 1981 following nationalisation and changing owners. It is now part of a nature reserve and the starting point of the incredible **Millennium Coastal Path**, a portion of which we will be walking today.

We will stop at the **Burry Port harbour area** with its many cafes and restaurants, and a view of the Gower Peninsula that we have admired on Day 2. East of the harbour entrance is the Burry Port Beach, mudflats turned into a golden shoreline. From Burry Port, we will push on to St David's.

(B)

**Accommodation:**

St. Davids Cross Hotel or similar

**Day 4**

**Locations:** St Davids

**Overview:**

St Davids in South Wales is the United Kingdom's smallest city in terms of population, a cathedral city that was the final resting place of Wales' patron saint, St David, and an important pilgrimage site in medieval Wales. Today we will explore St Davids on a half-day tour, including an

entrance to the **St Davids Bishop's Palace**. The immense medieval palace dates from the 13th century and is adjacent to the city cathedral.

The rest of the afternoon can be spent at our leisure. (B)

**Accommodation:**

St. Davids Cross Hotel or similar

**Day 5**

**Locations:** St Davids - Aberystwyth

**Overview:**

Today we will take a scenic drive from St Davids to Aberystwyth along the Welsh coastline. We have the rest of the day free upon arrival.

(B)

**Accommodation:**

Gwesty'r Marine Hotel & Spa or similar

**Day 6**

**Locations:** Aberystwyth - Caernarfon - Beaumaris

**Overview:**

From this small seaside town, we will move to Caernarfon, where we'll enjoy a guided city highlights tour, with entrance to **Caernarfon Castle**. Caernarfon Castle was built on the shoreline, consisting of a castle, town walls, and a quay all built at the same time. The massive project took 47 years to complete. Historians say the walls of Caernarfon reflect the design of the walls of Constantinople, hearkening back to a Roman past that the British isles shared before the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons, and announcing the domination of the English rulers.

After the tour, we will move to Beaumaris, where we will stay the night.

**Accommodation:**

The Bulkeley Hotel or similar

## Day 7

**Locations:** Beaumaris - Holyhead - Beaumaris

### Overview:

After breakfast, we will move to **Holyhead** for some free time to spend in the town. Holyhead is the largest town in Anglesey and the busiest port on the Irish Sea. You can go on a coastal walk or visit one of the fine pubs in town.

On the way back to our accommodation, we will stop en route at **Beaumaris Castle**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Like Caernarfon Castle, Beaumaris Castle was built as part of the English king Edward I's campaign to conquer Wales. The remainder of the day is free.

(B)

### Accommodation:

The Bulkeley Hotel or similar

## Day 8

**Locations:** Beaumaris - Llanberis

### Overview:

Today we will transfer to **Llanberis**, located at the foot of majestic Mt Snowdon and the centre for outdoor activities in the Celtic heartland of Snowdonia. We will experience this outdoor beauty on the **Lon Las Peris walk** (1.5 kilometres), a section of which takes you by beautiful **Llyn Padarn**, a glacially formed lake in Snowdonia.

(B)

### Accommodation:

Royal Victoria Hotel Snowdonia or similar

## Day 9

**Locations:** Llanberis - Conwy - Llanberis

### Overview:

From Llanberis we will take a day trip to the walled town of Conwy, where we will go on a half-day tour of the town. Among the places we

will visit is **Conwy Castle**, built by the order of Edward I in the 13th century, filling it with English settlers and barring the native Welsh from entering. This fortification consists of eight massive towers connected by a curtain wall.

After exploring the medieval battlements, we walk the coastal path to **Morfa Beach**, where we'll have time to spend at leisure before returning to Llanberis. (B)

**Accommodation:**

Royal Victoria Hotel Snowdonia or similar

**Day 10**

**Locations:** Llanberis - Betws-y-Coed

**Overview:**

We will transfer from Llanberis to Betws-y-Coed, which will be our base for the next two nights.

After settling in, we will take a walk to **Swallow Falls**, a beautiful series of waterfalls formed by the foaming waters of the Afon Llugwy river.

The remainder of the day is free. (B)

**Accommodation:**

Royal Oak Hotel or similar

**Day 11**

**Locations:** Betws-y-Coed - Bala - Betws-y-Coed

**Overview:**

Today we will be visiting Bala. We will have free time to explore the town's walking trails on our own and to visit **Bala Lake**. Bala Lake is also called Llyn Tegid, the "Lake of Serenity", and is the largest natural lake in Wales. At the end of the day, we return to our accommodation in Betws-y-Coed.

**Accommodation:**

Royal Oak Hotel or similar



## Day 12

**Locations:** Betws-y-Coed - Llangollen

### Overview:

Today we will travel to the small town of Llangollen on the River Dee to take a boat cruise down the Llangollen Canal through beautiful countryside. We will travel on the canal via the 18-arched Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, completed in 1805, and to the small village of Froncysyllte on the banks of the river. From there, we return by coach to our accommodation in Llangollen. The rest of the day is free.

(B)

### Accommodation:

Wild Pheasant Hotel & Spa or similar

## Day 13

**Locations:** Llangollen

### Overview:

While yesterday we travelled by water, today we will travel by rail. The **Llangollen Railway** is the only standard gauge heritage railway in North Wales, and follows the River Dee through the picturesque Dee Valley. Opened in 1975, this is a 10-mile restoration of a longer line that originally reached Llangollen town in 1865. We will take a relaxing traditional steam train ride from Llangollen to Carrog, which will give us a taste of how people used to travel.

We shall transfer back to Llangollen, but stop en route to view the **Horseshoe Pass**, a mountain pass that wraps around the sides of a valley in a horseshoe shape, and **Valle Crucis Abbey** (Valley of the Cross), founded in 1201 and one of Wales' best-preserved abbeys.

(B)

### Accommodation:

Wild Pheasant Hotel & Spa or similar

## Day 14

**Locations:** Llangollen - Shrewsbury

### Overview:

Today we will travel to the town of Shrewsbury on the River Severn for a half-day guided tour. Among the places we will visit include treasures dating from the 11th century: **Shrewsbury Castle**, a red sandstone castle that was founded in 1070, and **Shrewsbury Abbey**, founded in 1083.

We will have free time to spend in the town before heading to our hotel. Shrewsbury is a town with a long history, having been founded in 800. It will be a great place to explore! (B)

### Accommodation:

Mercure Shrewsbury Albrighton Hall or similar

## Day 15

**Locations:** Shrewsbury - Storey Arms - Crickhowell

### Overview:

From Shrewsbury we will push on to **Storey Arms** to take a walk up to **Pen y Fan**. Storey Arms is an outdoor education centre in the Brecon Beacons mountain range, a great place to begin our walk up to the highest peak in South Wales. Pen y Fan ("the top peak") has an elevation of 886 metres, and the walk up features a sandstone footpath. The summit is marked by a Bronze Age cairn.

We will return to Storey Arms and relax in our hotel in Crickhowell. (B)

### Accommodation:

Dragon Inn or similar

## Day 16

**Locations:** Crickhowell - Cardiff

**Overview:**

We will transfer from Crickhowell to our accommodation in Cardiff. The rest of the day is free, until we meet again for our farewell dinner.

(B, D)

**Accommodation:**

Jury's Inn Cardiff or similar

## Day 17

**Locations:** Cardiff

**Overview:**

Our tour and services end after breakfast.

(B)

## Inclusions / Exclusions

### What's included in our Tour

- 16 nights of hotel accommodation.
- 16 breakfasts and 6 dinners.
- Transport in comfortable and modern coaches.
- Cruise and rail services as indicated.
- Gratuities and necessary tips.
- Services of a tour leader for the duration of tour.

### What's not included in our Tour

- International airfares and departure taxes.
- Comprehensive international travel insurance.
- Items of a personal nature such as telephone calls and laundry.

## Level 2 - Moderate

Participants must be able to carry their own luggage, climb and descend stairs, be in good health, mobile and able to participate in 3-5 hours of physical activity per day, the equivalent of walking/hiking up to 8 kilometres on uneven ground.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any requests for further information about this tour or any others offered by Odyssey Travel.