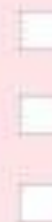


WALES



Wales is bounded by the Dee estuary and Liverpool Bay to the north, the Irish Sea to the west, the Severn estuary and the Bristol Channel to the south, and England to the east. Anglesey (Môn), the largest island in England and Wales, lies off the north-western coast and is linked to the mainland by road and rail bridges. The varied coastline of Wales measures about 970 km. The country stretches 210 km from north to south, and its east-west width varies, reaching 145 km across in the north, narrowing to about 65 km in the centre, and widening again to more than 160 km across the southern portion.

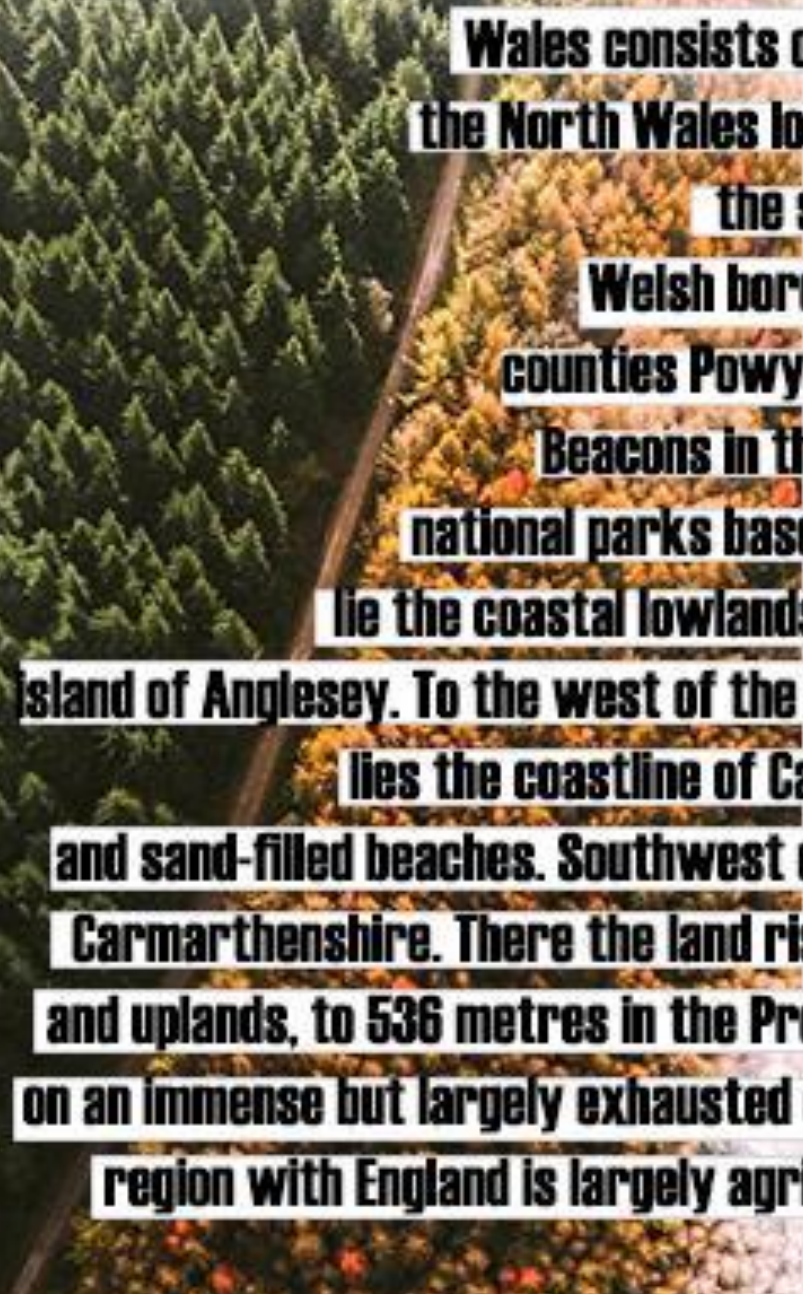




Glaciers during the Pleistocene Epoch (about 2,600,000 to 11,700 years ago) carved much of the Welsh landscape into deeply dissected mountains, plateaus, and hills, including the north-south-trending Cambrian Mountains, a region of plateaus and hills that are themselves fragmented by rivers. Protruding from that backbone are two main mountain areas—the Brecon Beacons in the south, rising to 886 metres at Pen y Fan.

and Snowdonia in the northwest, reaching 1,085 metres at Snowdon, the highest mountain in Wales. Snowdonia's magnificent scenery is accentuated by stark and rugged rock formations, many of volcanic origin, whereas the Beacons generally have softer outlines. The uplands are girdled on the seaward side by a series of steep-sided coastal plateaus ranging in elevation from about 30 to 210 metres. Many of them have been pounded by the sea into spectacular steplike cliffs. Other plateaus give way to coastal flats that are estuarine in origin.



An aerial photograph of a forest. A dirt path or road winds through the trees, which are mostly green but have patches of yellow and orange, indicating autumn. The lighting is bright, with some lens flare visible on the left side.

Wales consists of six traditional regions—the rugged central heartland, the North Wales lowlands and Isle of Anglesey county, the Cardigan coast, the southwestern lowlands, industrial South Wales, and the Welsh borderland. The heartland, which coincides partly with the counties Powys, Denbighshire, and Gwynedd, extends from the Brecon Beacons in the south to Snowdonia in the north and includes the two national parks based on those mountain areas. To the north and northwest lie the coastal lowlands, together with the Llyn Peninsula in Gwynedd and the island of Anglesey. To the west of the heartland, and coinciding with the county of Ceredigion, lies the coastline of Cardigan Bay, with numerous cliffs and coves and pebble- and sand-filled beaches. Southwest of the heartland are the counties of Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire. There the land rises eastward from St. David's Head, through moorlands and uplands, to 536 metres in the Preseli Hills. South Wales stretches south of the heartland on an immense but largely exhausted coalfield. To the east of the heartland, the Welsh border region with England is largely agricultural and is characterized by rolling countryside and occasional wooded hills and mountainous moorland.



IRELAND

IRISH SEA

St. George's Channel

CELTIC SEA

WALES

ENGLAND

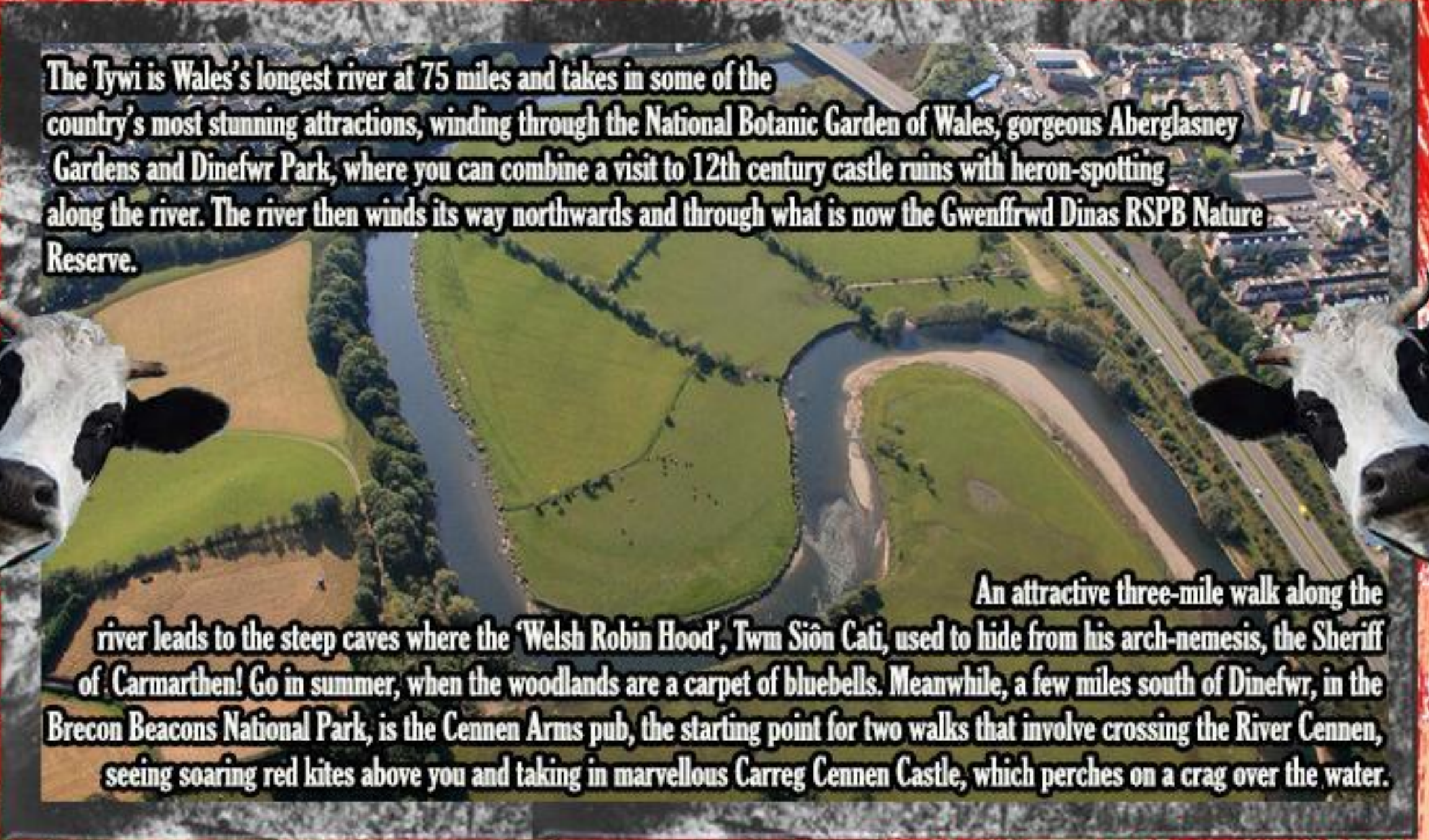
0 15 30 mi
0 20 40 km

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The River Wye

It was voted Britain's favourite river thanks to its stunning scenery and abundant wildlife, with features of interest for everyone. It's for: 'rowers, canoeists, anglers, walkers, nature lovers and anyone with an eye for scenic beauty'.





The Tywi is Wales's longest river at 75 miles and takes in some of the country's most stunning attractions, winding through the National Botanic Garden of Wales, gorgeous Aberglasney Gardens and Dinefwr Park, where you can combine a visit to 12th century castle ruins with heron-spotting along the river. The river then winds its way northwards and through what is now the Gwenffrwd Dinas RSPB Nature Reserve.



An attractive three-mile walk along the river leads to the steep caves where the 'Welsh Robin Hood', Twm Siôn Cati, used to hide from his arch-nemesis, the Sheriff of Carmarthen! Go in summer, when the woodlands are a carpet of bluebells. Meanwhile, a few miles south of Dinefwr, in the Brecon Beacons National Park, is the Cennen Arms pub, the starting point for two walks that involve crossing the River Cennen, seeing soaring red kites above you and taking in marvellous Carreg Cennen Castle, which perches on a crag over the water.

Llyn Ogwen



If you've already scaled Snowdonia's peaks and fancy giving your thighs a rest, head on a circular walk of Llyn Ogwen, with amazing views of Tryfan and the Glyderau mountains — and no hills to climb! The ribbon lake is a mile long and has a depth of just three metres, so it should be easy for the avid legend-hunter to locate 'Excalibur', King Arthur's famed sword (known as 'Caledfwlch' in Welsh), as many claim Llyn Ogwen is the final resting place of the sword...



Lake Vyrnwy

Lake Vyrnwy is, in fact, a reservoir, created in the 1880s to supply Liverpool with a fresh supply of water. The site chosen for the reservoir housed a small village, Llanwddyn, which was submerged (don't worry, it was evacuated first!); as you gaze over the unblemished surface of the water, it's incredible to think of the houses, post office and parish church that lie beneath.

It's also hard to believe it was man-made; the five-mile long stretch is surrounded by mountain scenery that shelters an abundance of wildlife — the lake and estate are jointly managed by the RSPB and Severn Trent Water. Bird-watchers and nature-lovers flock to Lake Vyrnwy, where you can enjoy a gentle 12-mile cycle around the water as well as numerous picturesque walks; it's also a magnet for luxury-seekers, who stay at the Lake Vyrnwy Hotel and Spa. Even if you don't stay, book a table with a view at the Tower Restaurant and enjoy fantastic food with a side of stunning scenery.



Llyn y Fan Fach



The road to reach Llyn y Fan Fach may be bumpy, and the walk up to the ridge slightly steep, but what a view over this magnificent body of water, overlooked by the majestic Black Mountain, once you reach the summit of Picws Du in the Brecon Beacons National Park. The glacial lake is the subject of a myth told in the medieval Mabinogion collection. An enchanted lady is said to have arisen from the lake and gone on to marry a local farmer, only for their marriage to be thwarted by magic and misunderstanding. The heroine fled back to her lake and the farmer had to bring up his three sons alone...



Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal

A scenic view of Bala Lake, a large body of water surrounded by green hills and mountains. In the foreground, the bows of two canoes are visible: a yellow one on the left and a red one on the right. The water is calm, reflecting the sky and the surrounding landscape. The text "Bala Lake" is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Bala Lake

The Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and River Dee



The River Teifi



Llyn Llydaw



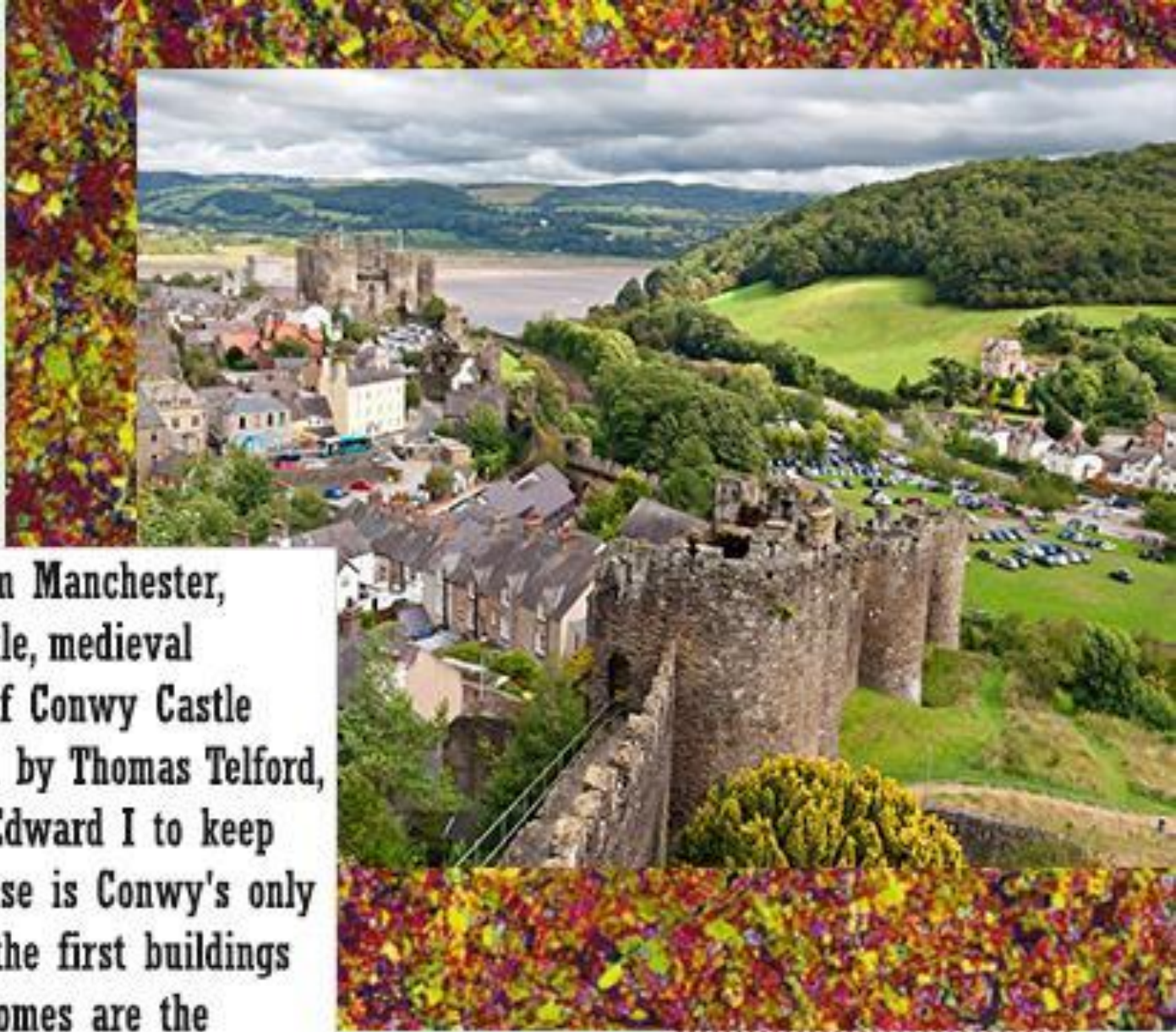
Built by King Edward I in the 13th century as a seat for the first Prince of Wales, Caernarfon Castle is one of the largest castles in the country. With its 13 towers and two gates, this massive castle is recognized as one of the most impressive and best-preserved medieval fortresses in Europe. Occupying the site of an even older Norman castle, Caernarfon Castle dominates the waters of the River Seiont and the Menai Strait on one side and is protected by a moat on the other. Its royal heritage continues to this day, and in 1969, it was the scene of Prince Charles's investiture as Prince of Wales.

Caernarfon Castle



Conwy

On the north coast of Wales, just a short distance from Manchester, Conwy offers something for everyone: a stunning castle, medieval architecture, and plenty of shopping. The best views of Conwy Castle and River Conwy, with its suspension bridge designed by Thomas Telford, are from the 13th-century town walls built by King Edward I to keep the Welsh at bay. The National Trust's Aberconwy House is Conwy's only surviving 14th-century merchant's house and one of the first buildings constructed inside the town walls. Other interesting homes are the Elizabethan Plas Mawr, and the Smallest House in Great Britain.



Separated from mainland Wales by the mile-wide Menai Strait - spanned by the Menai Suspension Bridge (1818) - the Isle of Anglesey is home to a number of quaint, small fishing villages scattered along its more than 100 miles of attractive coastline. Along with its sandy beaches and landmarks such as South Stack Lighthouse, the island's mild climate makes it popular for day trippers and campers alike. The smaller Holy Island, linked to Anglesey by bridge, is a popular holiday resort with two promenades (one of them 1.5 miles long), while tiny Salt Island offers great views and a chance for some bird watching.

Anglesey



Hay-on-Wye is a small town on the River Wye, very close to the English border and within the borders of Brecon Beacons National Park. The National Book Town, with at least two dozen bookshops, Hay-on-Wye is probably best known as the location of a prestigious annual Hay Festival, sponsored by the Guardian newspaper. The festival started in 1988 and today draws 80,000 people annually to discuss the arts with well-known writers, philosophers and other artists.

Hay-on-Wye





St. David's Cathedral

Located in the City of St. David's in Pembrokeshire county, St. David's Cathedral is a beautiful example of religious architecture in the Middle Ages. The patron saint of Wales, St. David was a Welsh bishop of the Catholic Church during the 6th century and was buried in the site's original structure. Construction for the existing cathedral was begun in the 1180s using purple-colored sandstone. Now part of the Church of Wales, the Norman cathedral houses numerous treasures, including 800-year-old bishop staffs gilded with gold, 13th-century silver chalices and a 1620 edition of the Welsh Bible.



thanks for watching