

Village Life In Wales

Please email jenny@britholidays.com for dates:

Our Village Life in Wales tour is designed for inveterate travelers who know the true character of a country is best found in its provinces, on its country lanes, in the village pub and on its 'village green'. Our unique tour program focuses on all that is very special about Wales, its lush well-kept countryside, picturesque villages, fine gardens, medieval castles and quaint cottages to name just a few. We will also introduce you to its rich culture as well as some of the extraordinary people who make their livelihood in the Welsh countryside. We travel in a very comfortable 'minicoach' with a maximum of 12 passengers, taking us where the large coaches cannot.

The Village

Our 'village base' for the duration of the tour will be Betws y Coed, Welsh for "Chapel in the Woods". The village was built almost entirely of stone and slate quarried from the mountains of Snowdonia and became a holiday destination with the arrival of the railway in 1868. Small hotels sprang up to accommodate travellers in Victorian times and the village is still a favourite haunt all year round for those who love the outdoor life. Naturalists, ramblers, anglers, artists and photographers can be seen any day gathered at the village's heart, the famous Pont-y-Pair (Bridge of the Cauldron).



The Gwydyr Hotel

During your Village Life in Wales experience, enjoy seven nights accommodation at the charming 3 Star Gwydyr Hotel overlooking the village green. The comfortable well appointed rooms are in keeping with its Victorian architecture and its central location make it ideal for evening strolls and river bank walks. The Gwydyr enjoys a reputation for fine regional cuisine and warm hospitality and is managed by the owners David and Owen Wainwright.

Snowdonia

A large part of the tour is within the boundaries of the SNOWDONIA NATIONAL PARK – Eryri to give its Welsh name, which is in the north-west of Wales and contains some of the most spectacular scenery in

southern Britain. The proximity of the mountain summits to the sea result in a huge variety of scenery and habitats in an intimate landscape. Bare summits, plummeting waterfalls, wood-clad valleys and sandy beaches all exist within a few miles of each other.

The Welsh Language

Welsh is still spoken on a daily basis by over 65% of the inhabitants of the National Park. This is a marvelous phenomenon when we consider the proximity of Wales to England, the comparative sizes of their population – 3 million against 50 million. The language is one of Europe’s oldest and closely related to Scottish and Irish Gaelic, Manx, Cornish and Breton.



Detailed Itinerary

Day 1 Saturday – Activities and Excursions

Arrive at our hotel any time after 12.00 noon free time to unpack and relax until 5.00 when you meet your guide and travelling companions for a drink followed by a familiarisation walk around the village before dinner. [D].



Day 2 Sunday – Activities and Excursions

Morning at leisure. The parish church of St Mary’s is practically next door to our hotel where bilingual services are held at 11.00.

At 1.00 we begin our journey through the dramatic **Llanberis Pass**

to visit the **Slate Museum** at Llanberis where we

discover the most

‘Welsh of Welsh industry’ through demonstrations, conducted tour and film. MVC concert tonight or Thursday.



Day 3 Monday – Activities and Excursions on The Isle of Anglesey

The Isle of Anglesey (Ynys Môn in Welsh) off the northwest coast of Wales. Access to the island is by means of two picturesque bridges, Telford's Suspension Bridge constructed in 1826 and in 1850, Robert Stephenson constructed the Britannia Bridge to carry the railroad that connects with ferry crossings to

Ireland. We visit **Penmon**, a peaceful and secluded corner on the south east of the island where we view the somber ruins of the Monastery, the ancient church of St Seiriol (1120 –1170) and a Holy Well that date back to pre Christian times. A lunch stop and some free time at the historic town of Beaumaris before the short drive through the countryside to **Oriel Mon** (Anglesey Art Gallery). The Oriel is a show place for local artists and craftspeople, and houses the works of **C. F. Tunnicliffe OBE. R A.** (1901 –1979) and **Sir Kyffi n Williams**, (1918 – 2006) as well as being a fascinating museum illustrating the island's history, culture and wildlife. No visit to the Island is complete without the obligatory photo stop at **Llanfairpwllgwyngychgogerychwyrndrobwylllandusuliogogogoch** – the smallest village with the longest name in the world. After a traditional 'Fish and Chips supper' we travel to the village of Bethesda to visit the **Penrhyn Male Voice choir** at rehearsal, Penrhyn is one of Wales' oldest and best known choirs formed in 1880. [BD].



Day 4 Tuesday – Activities and Excursions

From Betws we take the road through the **Lledr Valley** passing Dolwyddelan Castle perched high above the valley floor, a reminder of the times when Wales was ruled by the powerful Prince, Llywelyn ab Iorwerth " the Great" in the 13th C. A little further along we leave the coach and board one of '**The Great Little Trains of Wales**' on a 12 mile scenic journey from the mountains to the village of Minffordd near the village of **Portmeirion**. This unique 'fantasy' village

was created by Welsh architect **Clough Williams-Ellis** between 1925 and 1975 primarily to show how 'the development of a naturally beautiful site need not lead to its defilement'. We will have lunch and some free time here before continuing our journey to **Beddgelert**, one of Snowdonia's prettiest villages

located at the south western gateway to the central peaks of Snowdonia. Maybe there will be time to take a river bank walk, browse the craft shops and taste Cadwaladr's homemade ice cream before our drive back through the Nant Gwynant pass and the rocky heights of Snowdonia. [BD].

Day 5 Wednesday – Activities and Excursions

Hidden away in a former mill in the tiny village of Ysbytty Ifan a group of five local women is providing an unique service of arranging the complete **Celtic Wedding Service**. Each of the women has a special talent and can provide everything that is required from stationery and cards, music to the wedding cake. We'll visit the showroom with Eleri who's in charge of catering for morning coffee and some of her traditional '**Welsh Cakes**'. We journey up the valley to **Llangwm** to meet farmer Aled Owen on his 700-acre farm to enjoy a sheep dog demonstration with his '**world champion dogs**'. Aled will also show us a dozen or so breeds of sheep that are found in Wales and tell us about their different characteristics. We will have lunch on the farm before we continue the day's travels with a visit to Llangollen, the picturesque town that 'Welcomes the World' in July each year when it hosts the **International Music Festival**. There will a little free time in the town and time to enjoy a journey along the **Canal in a horse drawn barge**. MVC concert tonight or Sunday. [BLD].

Day 6 Thursday - Activities and Excursions

Our day begins with a visit to Elaine and Morgan who are fifth generation of the Williams family at **Trefriw Woolen Mill**. The mill dates back to 1859 when Thomas Williams harnessed the power of water from the Cadnant River and created a mill to manufacture Welsh double weave tapestry, bedspreads and tweeds, Morgan will give a weaving demonstration on a Dobcross loom and tell us some of the history and traditions of weaving in the Conwy valley. We continue our journey to remote woodland by **Porthllwyd Falls** to meet Vicky Buxton at her pottery studio and workshop where she makes a selection of ceramics, decorative stoneware and porcelain. We'll stop for lunch at nearby 'Tu Hwnt i'r Bont' a former 15th century courthouse and is now one of the best "Tea Rooms" in Wales serving mouth-watering home baked scones and the Welsh delicacy, 'Bara Brith. After lunch, we visit **Gwydyr Castle**, the ancestral home of the powerful Wynne family; it's not a castle in the traditional sense but a fine example of a court-yard or fortified manor house. The property has been restored by the owners Judy Corbett and Peter Wellford, an account of which is described in Judy's book titled 'Castles in the Air' (ISBN 0-091-89731-9). [BD].

Day 7 Friday – Activities and Excursions

First call today is a visit to Bodnant (National Trust) one of the best gardens in Britain. Bodnant was created in the early years of the 20th century by the 2nd Lord Aberconwy with its five Italianate-style terraces, formal lawns, wooded valley, mature trees and wild garden - a wonderful start to the day. We then continue to **Llandudno**, one of the classic British seaside resorts. Its wide promenade, elegant Victorian facades framed on a curving bay between the **Great and the Little Orme** headlands. We drive to the summit of the Great Orme to enjoy spectacular views of the town and Snowdonia Mountains in the distance, and then, onwards to **Conwy**, a town dominated by one of the most impressive of all the Welsh castles. Your guide will conduct a tour of the castle and then give you free time to explore some of other historic houses and places of interest in this **Medieval Walled Town**, or catch up with last minute shopping. The day ends with a **'farewell' dinner** at a local country pub. [BD].

Day 8 – Tour Ends After Breakfast