

# WALES

With a touch of Southern England

June 19, 2019 - 14 Days



## a world to experience



### Fares Per Person:

**\$7440** double/twin

**\$7765** single

**tour**  
a more intimate travel experience



- > This tour is limited to 25 people. Early booking recommended!
- > Please add 0.4% GST.
- > **Early Bookers:** \$300 discount on first 8 seats; \$150 on next 4
- > **Experience Points:** Earn 151 points from this tour.  
Redeem **151 points** if you book by **February 27.**

### Includes

- Transportation to/from Vancouver Airport
- Air Canada flight from Vancouver to London Heathrow and return
- Current air taxes, security fees and surcharges
- 12 nights accommodation and hotel taxes
- Coach transportation in Britain for 12 days
- British guide for 12 days
- Roman Baths and Georgian Pump Room
- Locally-guided tour of Cardiff
- Cardiff Castle with guided house tour
- Locally-guided tour through Wye Valley
- Tintern Abbey
- Tredegar House
- Gower Heritage Centre
- Museum of Welsh Life
- Brecon Beacons National Park
- Penderyn Whisky Distillery Tour
- Abbey Cwm Hir Hall
- Horse-drawn Llangollen Canal boat journey
- Cable car to summit of Great Orme
- Descent from Great Orme by funicular
- Snowdonia National Park
- Cogwheel railway to summit of Mount Snowdon
- Llanfair PG
- Caernarfon Castle
- Trefriw Woollen Mills
- Rail journey from Ffestiniog to Porthmadog
- Portmeirion architectural village
- Conwy Castle
- Luggage handling at hotels and airline
- Gratuities to British guide, driver and local guides
- Knowledgeable Wells Gray tour director
- **24 meals:** 12 breakfasts, 7 lunches, 5 dinners

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## Wales

Wales is part of the United Kingdom and the island of Great Britain, bordered by England, the Irish Sea, and the Bristol Channel. Its population is about 3.1 million. Wales has over 2,700 km of coastline and is largely mountainous, with its higher peaks in the north and central areas, including Snowdon, the highest summit. Welsh national identity emerged among the Britons after the Roman withdrawal from Britain in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, and Wales is regarded as one of the modern Celtic nations. The country was annexed by England in 1535. At the dawn of the Industrial Revolution, the mining industry transformed Wales from an agricultural society into an industrial nation, but now the mines are closed and the economy depends on the public sector, service industries, and tourism.

Wales closely shares its political and social history with the rest of Britain and most people speak English as a first language, but the country has retained a distinct cultural identity and is officially bilingual. Over 560,000 Welsh language speakers live in Wales, and the language is spoken by a majority of the residents in parts of the north and west. From the late 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, Wales acquired its popular image as the "land of song", in part due to the eisteddfod tradition. At many international sporting events, such as the FIFA World Cup, Rugby World Cup, and the Commonwealth Games, Wales had its own national teams, but at the Olympic Games, Welsh athletes compete as part of a Great Britain team.

Previous Wells Gray tours of Britain have included a day in Wales, but this tour is the first comprehensive visit. We have partnered again with a British tour operator who has created this unique itinerary featuring lesser-known sights of Wales with personal experiences that put you in touch with the people.

## Itinerary

### Wednesday, June 19:

Transportation is provided to Vancouver Airport and we fly this afternoon on Air Canada to London.

### Thursday, June 20:

*Meals: L,D*

We arrive at London Heathrow in late morning (8 hours ahead of Pacific Time). Our driver and guide meet us at the airport. It is a two-hour drive west to **Bath**, one of England's most beautiful, elegant and historic cities, and is classed as a World Heritage City. The Romans were captivated by the Bath region over 2,000 years ago, when Bath was a vast green valley with a miraculous stream of endless hot water. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Bath became a fashionable health resort and today we take a walking tour of the remains of the Roman Baths and the graceful Georgian architecture. We stay overnight at the Leigh Park Hotel in Bradford upon Avon.

### Friday, June 21:

*Meals: B,L*

We drive through Bristol and across the 5-km long Prince of Wales Bridge over the Severn Estuary. **Welcome to Wales!** Soon we arrive in Cardiff, the capital of Wales. We meet our local guide for a city tour featuring **Cardiff Castle** which was built in the late 11<sup>th</sup> century by Norman invaders on top of a 3<sup>rd</sup> century Roman fort. Different owners through the centuries have renovated the castle and your guide leads you through the gothic towers to discover the magnificent rooms with

decorative murals, intricate stained glass, gilded ceilings, and elaborate carving. We stay three nights at the Cardiff Marriott Hotel.

### Saturday, June 22:

*Meals: B,L*

We drive through the **Wye Valley**, designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. There is a castle around every bend in the River Wye, hawks soaring over the fields and forests, and secret places along every stream. Many artists and writers have sought to capture its tranquil charm and elusive beauty. We explore two grand buildings — **Tintern Abbey** which was rebuilt in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, and **Tredegar House** which was the ancestral home of the Morgans for over 500 years and is surrounded by 90 acres of gorgeous gardens.

### Sunday, June 23:

*Meals: B*

We head west from Cardiff to the **Swansea** area along the south coast of Wales. The Gower Heritage Centre is a vibrant crafts and rural life museum with a 12<sup>th</sup> century water-powered corn and saw mill. Swansea was the birthplace of actress Catherine Zeta Jones and poet Dylan Thomas, and the district of Mumbles was a popular Victorian seaside resort. The **Museum of Welsh Life** is one of Europe's foremost open-air museums representing the life and culture of Wales and situated in 100 acres of parkland. The buildings on the site include a school, a chapel, and several workshops where craftsmen such as blacksmith and cooper demonstrate their skills to the public.

**Monday, June 24:***Meals: B,D*

We drive into **Brecon Beacons National Park**, established in 1957 to protect rugged mountains and moors. We visit the excellent **Penderyn Whisky distillery**, the only distillery in Wales and one of the smallest in the world, and enjoy free time in Hay-on-Wye, nicknamed "town of books" because it has 20 book shops. We stay overnight at the Metropole Hotel in **Llandrindod Wells**.

**Tuesday, June 25:***Meals: B,L,D*

We continue north through the Elan Valley, highlighted by a Welsh Water Guided Tour of the fabulous **Abbey Cwm Hir Hall**. It was built in 1833 by a London lawyer, but the purchase of 3,000 acres and the extravagant home ruined him financially. The estate had many other owners, most recently Paul and Victoria Humpherston in 1997 who spent nine years restoring it to a building of Gothic splendour with 12 acres of Victorian gardens overlooking the ruins of the 12<sup>th</sup> century Cistercian Abbey of Long Valley and the grave of Llewellyn the Last. We stay two nights in **Chester**, England's medieval city, at the Crowne Plaza.

**Wednesday, June 26:***Meals: B*

This morning, we drive to **Llangollen**, a quaint Welsh village and experience the pace of life in "the olden days". The village is noted for the Llangollen Canal and we enjoy a **boat ride, pulled by horses**, including the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct which carries the canal across the River Dee at a height of 38 metres. The afternoon and evening are leisure time in Chester.

**Thursday, June 27:***Meals: B,D*

We travel the north coast to arrive in **Llandudno**, the country's largest resort which is uniquely situated between the headlands of Great and Little Orme with two wonderful beaches. Llandudno has kept its Victorian and Edwardian elegance and splendour, despite its modern attractions. For a spectacular view of the coast, we ride by cable car to the top of **Great Orme**, 200 metres above the ocean, then descend by the funicular railway. We stay three nights at the historic Imperial Hotel on the waterfront of Llandudno.

**Friday, June 28:***Meals: B,L*

The highest point in Britain outside of Scotland is **Mount Snowdon** at 1,085 metres. We drive into Snowdonia National Park and, at Llanberis, board the **cogwheel mountain railway** which carries us up to the summit. It opened in 1896 and climbs 960 metres in 7.6 km. On a clear day, there is an

awesome panorama looking over the Irish Sea, Cardigan Bay, the Isle of Anglesey, and the other barren peaks of Snowdonia. This afternoon, we cross to Anglesey and visit the village that is graced with the world's second longest name: **Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwlllantysiliogogogoch**, or Llanfair PG as it is often abbreviated. This afternoon, we tour **Caernarfon Castle**, made famous by the investiture of Prince Charles as Prince of Wales in 1969. Construction began in 1283 by Edward I, and it became one of Europe's greatest medieval fortresses. The castle walls with their bands of coloured stone were modelled on the walls of Constantinople.

**Saturday, June 29:***Meals: B,L*

We visit **Trefriw Woollen Mills** where traditional Welsh bedspreads and travelling rugs are woven, as well as tweeds which are tailored into garments, hats and caps. Throws, cushions, shoulder bags, and purses are made from the smaller tapestry patterns. A demonstration of weaving is provided, then there is a unique opportunity to try weaving yourself on small hand looms. We continue to Ffestiniog for **a train journey to Porthmadog**. The nearby village of Portmeirion is set on its own private peninsula on the south shores of Snowdonia. It was created by Welsh architect Clough Williams-Ellis to demonstrate that a naturally beautiful place can be developed without spoiling it.

**Sunday, June 30:***Meals: B,L,D*

Our first stop is massive **Conwy Castle**, a gritty, dark-stoned fortress which has the rare ability to evoke an authentic medieval atmosphere. Conwy was constructed by Edward I between 1283 and 1289 as one of the key fortresses in his 'iron ring' of castles to contain the Welsh. Afterwards, we continue through Snowdonia and Betws y Coed, admiring the rugged mountain scenery, tranquil lakes, and fast flowing rivers. Our last night in Britain is in **Stratford-upon-Avon** where we stay at Stratford Manor. A farewell dinner is planned.

**Monday, July 1:***Meals: B*

Happy Canada Day! The morning is free time in Stratford. Anne Hathaway's Cottage is a popular attraction. We leave at noon for Heathrow and our flight on Air Canada is non-stop to Vancouver. We stay overnight at Pacific Gateway Hotel.

**Tuesday, July 2:***Meals: B*

Transportation is provided to your Victoria pickup point.

## Tour Notes:

**Currency & Fare Changes:** The British Pound is used in Wales. As this tour has been planned and priced 10 months before departure, exchange fluctuations between the Canadian dollar and the Pound could affect the fare, in which case you will be notified of the increase or decrease. The flight has been priced based on current taxes and fuel prices, and there could be changes to these amounts.

**Gratuities** have been paid for all included meals, your British driver and guide, and local city guides. The customary gratuities to your Wells Gray tour director and BC drivers are at your discretion.

**Documentation:** A valid passport is required with expiry after July 1, 2019. There are no border controls between England and Wales. A visa is not required.

**Triples** are not available on this tour due to the different sizes of British hotel rooms.

**Activity Level:** Due to the historic nature of some attractions, it will be necessary to climb stairs, walk on uneven surfaces such as cobblestone streets, and walk up to one kilometre at a time. Rooms in some hotels may be



reached by some stairs after riding the elevator. Sometimes the coach cannot drive all the way to an attraction. There are many stops during this tour and you must be able to get on and off the coach by yourself without delaying your fellow travellers. The coaches cannot carry a scooter. There can be long walks in Vancouver and Heathrow airports; request a cart or wheelchair in advance if this could be an issue for you. Please consider these mobility issues prior to booking this tour. If you are not able to participate in Activity Level 2, Wells Gray Tours recommends that you bring a companion to assist you. The tour director, British guide and driver, and local guides have many responsibilities, so please do not expect them, or your fellow travellers, to provide ongoing assistance. If you are not capable of keeping up with the group or require ongoing assistance, the tour director may stop you from participating in some activities or some days of the tour. In extreme situations, you may be required to leave the tour and travel home at your own expense; travel insurance will probably not cover you.

## Tour Policies

**Payments:** A deposit of \$800 per person is requested at the time of booking and the balance is due February 27, 2019. By paying the deposit, you agree to the Terms & Conditions, Activity Level and Cancellation Policy outlined.

**Discounts:** Early bookers receive \$300 discount on first 8 seats and \$150 on next 4 seats for booking early with deposit. The discount is not offered after February 27.

**Cancellation Policy:** Up to January 28, 2019, your tour payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of \$100 per person. From January 29 to February 27, the cancellation charge is \$300 per person. From February 28 to April 11, the cancellation charge is 50% of the tour fare. From April 12 to May 10, the cancellation charge is 80% of the tour fare. After May 10, there is no refund.

**Travel Insurance:** A Comprehensive Insurance policy is available through Wells Gray Tours and coverage is provided by Travel Guard. Policies purchased at deposit include a waiver of the pre-existing condition clause for medical and cancellation claims, otherwise policies can be purchased no later than at final payment. Please contact us for details.

**Home pickups and dropoffs** may be offered in Greater Victoria, depending on the number of people booked and the size of the chartered vehicle. Decision is made about 2 weeks before departure and you will be contacted about your pickup point and time.

**Tour 25:** This is a Tour 25 departure, meaning capacity of this tour is limited to 25 participants, a more intimate travel experience.

**Photo credit:** Wikipedia (Snowdon Mountain Railway)

**E-points:** This tour earns 151 e-points. Each time you travel on a Wells Gray tour, you earn Experience Points, or e-points. One point equals \$1. Redeem your points on select tours or accumulate enough points to earn a free tour! Redemptions offered until February 27.

**Consumer Protection BC Licence: #65842**