

# Destinations - Wales - North and South

The smallest of the 4 countries that make up the British Isles, often overlooked, but so full of history, architecture, scenery and song. Wales is the friendly, green, hilly bit on the western side of Britain. We've got England to the East, and the Irish Sea to the West. We're about 2 hours west of London by road or by rail.

## Why visit Wales?

Of course, there are as many different reasons as there are visitors. But ask most people, and they'll probably start talking about the history and heritage, the people and the wonderful countryside.



Wales is part of Britain, but it looks different and it feels different. We have the things you like about Britain (including great fish & chips!), but we also have our own language, a Celtic history that stretches back to pre-Roman times, and lots of castles to visit. Over 600 at the last count. Then there's the Welsh National Opera (one of the world's premier Opera Companies), the largest single-span glasshouse in the world (at the National Botanic Garden of Wales), and a cool flag with a red dragon on it.

## What does Wales look like?

Mostly green and very beautiful. We've got 3 National Parks, and 5 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, all part of a landscape that offers opportunities for all kinds of activities. Walking, cycling, climbing, golf, mountain biking and paragliding are just the beginning of the list.

With a land area of over 8,000 square miles, Wales is about the same size as Massachusetts with a population: 2,903,085 people; Aaa about 12,000,000 woolly sheep - grazing peacefully on our green hillsides.

The capital city, Cardiff is home to the Welsh National Opera, the National Museum Wales, the Millennium Centre and the Millennium Stadium. And naturally, a busy annual program of festivals and events.

Mount Snowdon, at 3,560ft, it's the highest point in England and Wales. Legend has it that King Arthur fought a duel with an ogre on the mountainside. Arthur won (as you'd expect), and buried his foe at the summit.

Coastline: 750 miles. During the summer months, you can spot seals and dolphins off most of the West Wales coast. Take a boat trip, or watch from the cliff-top hiking trails.

## Welsh Connections

Famous sons and daughters of Wales you will have heard of include Dylan Thomas, Catherine Zeta-Jones, Duffy, Richard Burton, Sir Tom Jones and Sir Anthony Hopkins. Lots of other people have been tracing their Welsh ancestry recently - including Tom Cruise, Susan Sarandon, Russell Crowe and Donny Osmond.

If you think you might have family connections with Wales too, take a look at our genealogy site at:

- o [Homecoming Wales -- http://www.homecomingwales.com/](http://www.homecomingwales.com/)

You can also view videos of Wales at:

- o <http://usa.visitwales.com/server.php?show=ConWebDoc.9535>