

Wales End to End

Tour Organiser: Helen and Harvey Bell

Saturday 01st to Saturday 08th August 2026

A seven day moving-on tour from Cardiff to Holyhead staying in hotels and self-catering accommodation carrying your own luggage, following NCN route 8.

Itinerary

Saturday 01st August 2026 The Taff Trail to Merthyr Tydfil and Bwlch

From the Celtic Ring on Mermaid Quay we ride round Hamadryad Park with views of the Bay to join the traffic free Taff Trail which we follow through Pontypridd ascending to Aberfan the site of the spoil tip disaster in 1966 that engulfed the local school, before reaching the famous mining town of Merthyr Tydfil for a break. After lunch we enter the Brecon Beacons National Park and continue to Talybont-on-Usk on a mix of quiet roads and tracks, most of which latter can be avoided if preferred, here we leave NCN 8 and continue to the Bunkhouse at Bwlch.

- Route distance: 84.0km
- Route altitude gain: 1041m
- Accommodation: Bunkhouse
- Meals: Self-Catering

Sunday 02nd August 2026 Rhayader

We pass through the attractive market town of Brecon on our way to Talgarth over some steep climbs before following the river Wye upstream to the next market town of Builth Wells. To avoid a busy main road we ride on tracks before reaching tarmac again and our destination at Rhayader.

- Route distance: 94.0km
- Route altitude gain: 1100m
- Accommodation: Self-catering apartments
- Meals: (B)

Monday 03rd August 2026 Rhayader day ride

We head west into the beautiful Elan Valley and ride along the edge of one of the large reservoirs that were built a hundred years ago to provide drinking water for Birmingham. There will be a chance to stop at the visitor centre to learn more, then after more waterside cycling we head into the hills and follow a track to connect us to Llangurig for lunch. In the afternoon we follow the quiet lanes of Mid-Wales through St Harmon and back to Rhayader.

- Route distance: 67.0km
- Route altitude gain: 1800m
- Accommodation: Self-catering apartments
- Meals: (B)

Tuesday 04th August 2026 Machynlleth

We follow a minor road along the Wye to characterful Llanidloes in Montgomeryshire, our first town on the river Severn and gateway to the Cambrian Mountains, the start of the northern section of the route. From here we travel up the River Severn and start the steady climb to Hafren Forrest Car Park before the big climb over Bryn Y Fedwen Pass, where you can rest and admire the views before the steep descent to Machynlleth, notionally the ancient capital of Wales and seat of its first parliament, formed at the start of the 15th century by Owain Glyndwr.

- Route distance: 63.0km
- Route altitude gain: 897m
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B)

Wednesday 05th August 2026 Porthmadog

We climb gradually from the start on quiet lanes to Corris before a long steep climb through the Dyfi Forrest reaching 408 meters. We are then only a mile from Cadair Idris known for its stunning views and have some relief with a steep descent to the main road where we cross and ride to Dolgellau for a well deserved coffee. After coffee we reach the highlight of the beautiful, mainly traffic free, flat Mawddach Trail, after which we ride along the coast, past Harlech Castle where there is an option to avoid more steep hills by staying on the main road rather than remaining on NCN 8. Before we cross the causeway to our hotel in Porthmadog you will see signs for Portmeirion, an Italianate village made famous by the 1960's TV programme, The Prisoner.

- Route distance: 76.0km
- Route altitude gain: 1290m
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B)

Thursday 06th August 2026 Beaumaris

Quiet roads take us through seaside Criccieth to Bryncir where the tarmac surfaced path goes all the way to Caernarfon, the last three miles running alongside the Welsh Highland Railway. We'll have a break here to enjoy the majesty of Caernarfon castle before four more miles of cycle path with great views of the Manai Strait before crossing the historic Menai Bridge over to Anglesey and Beaumaris.

- Route distance: 69.0km
- Route altitude gain: 734m
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: Self-Catering

Friday 07th August 2026 Beaumaris Loop

The last leg after the Menai Bridge is less hilly than previous days and takes us on quiet roads through Anglesey before crossing the bridge onto Holy Island to reach the end of NCN 8 at Holyhead. We start our return on NCN 5 but soon leave it to head south east and round Cefni Reservoir before our return to Beaumaris.

- Route distance: 104.0km
- Route altitude gain: 909m
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B)

Saturday 08th August 2026 Tour ends

There is the opportunity to follow NCN 5 along the North Wales coast to Chester station or catch a train from Bangor.

- No cycling
- Accommodation: None
- Meals: (B)

Dates and Prices

Cost

- Land only price: £515

Payment Schedule

A deposit of £100 per person is required as soon as possible once the Tour Organiser has confirmed your booking, with the final balance to be paid by 01-June-2026.

Price includes:

- 7 nights accommodation and cycle storage

- 6 breakfasts

Price does not include:

- Any other meals and one breakfast. Travel Insurance. Travel expenses

Cancellations

Written Notice Received

Cancellation Charge

Before June 1st

£100 deposit

After June 1st

Full price of Tour

The price of £515 (land only) is based on a minimum number of 8 people taking part in the holiday. If there are insufficient bookings by Monday 01st June 2026, we will contact you and return all monies paid.

Holiday Information

Grade and area covered by the holiday

This holiday is classed as energetic as it's hilly and we are carrying own luggage.

Cycling from Cardiff in South Wales, north through Mid Wales to the northern tip of Anglesey at Holyhead.

We cycle on quiet, often hilly roads, cycle paths and occasionally tracks following National Cycle Network route 8, through unspoilt countryside, including Snowdonia and The Brecon Beacons National Parks and some interesting industrial history using local cafes en-route.

Travel and communication

The tour starts in Cardiff and finishes in Beaumaris. The nearest rail station is Cardiff at the start and Bangor at the end.

Travel to the start and from the finish is not included in this holiday. It is very important that you note that neither your Tour Organiser nor Bikexplore are responsible for you in any way until the appointed time at the designated meeting point. Should you fail to arrive at the appointed time for whatever reason, we will not be responsible for any additional expenses you may incur in order to meet up with the tour group. Before finalising travel arrangements, you should ensure that the tour is definitely going ahead.

Should there be insufficient bookings or pandemic travel restrictions are re-imposed, we reserve the right to cancel the tour at any time. It is therefore recommended that you book fully flexible and refundable transport and accommodation or wait until you have been told the tour will go ahead. In the event of the tour being cancelled we will not be responsible for any losses incurred outside what you pay us.



We will use WhatsApp to communicate details like café stops, meal arrangements, places of interest and any emergencies on route. Ideally everyone will bring a smart phone and be happy to be included in the group.

If you are unable to join the WhatsApp group I can only communicate with you in an emergency.

Accommodation

The maximum number of participants will be 10 excluding the tour organisers.

The first night is the Star Bunkhouse sleeping two per room in the bottom bed of bunkbeds with the option to self-cook.

The second and third nights are holiday apartments with the option to self-cook.

The other nights are hotels. In the Premier Inn each room has twin beds, you can store your bikes in the room.

Prices are based on two people sharing a room, there is no single option.

Meals, health and diet

All breakfasts except at the Premier Inn are provided. The Star Bunkhouse breakfast will be a simple one that the tour organisers will provide, buying it on-route.

The two breakfasts at the holiday apartments will be provided by the tour organisers, the rest will be provided by the hotels.

We'll stop at cafes for lunches and coffee where possible but you should always carry spare food in case these aren't available.

The tour organisers will arrange group meals for those that want them in the evening.

Check that you have informed the Tour Organiser of any dietary requirements in your Booking Form.

Please remember to pack any medications that you need to take regularly.

Cycles and equipment

- Ideally a touring/gravel/hybrid bike, electric or tandem (if you can fit it into a hotel room). I suggest medium weight tyres (i.e. NOT heavily treaded mountain bike tyres). I would take a minimum of 28mm wide tyres.
- I recommend at least two spare innertubes and pump. I will carry basic general tools and a basic first aid kit, but I suggest you also bring a small first aid kit and any tools that are specific to your bike. Two water bottles should be ample as we are stopping at cafes.

Bikeexplore

- You should ensure your bike is well maintained, paying particular attention to wheels, tyres and brakes. A low (easy) bottom gear is useful on the hills.
- Mudguards are optional, but if it is wet then it's not so much fun cycling behind someone without them.
- A lightweight lock is advisable for when we stop at cafes.
- A bell/horn is essential for the cycle paths.
- Emergency rations e.g. energy bars are good to have, and I suggest a map, or some means of navigation.

Ride and rest days

- A seven day moving-on trip carrying your own luggage except two places where we stay for two nights at the same accommodation.
- Most of each day will be spent cycling. People will be able to ride with the led group at around 19-23 km/h (on level sections) or by themselves, usually meeting up at cafes for lunch and refreshment breaks, the co-leader will ride at the back of the led group.
- It is expected that you may want to stop for photographs, look at the view or explore some local object and this is okay. You are on holiday.
- Inevitably, parts of the route are hilly and there is no back-up vehicle, although some days we are near railway stations, so you do need to be fit to get the most out of this tour. It is essential to get out on your bike and do at least 50-to-80 kilometer rides with bags before the tour starts. There are some descents too, so you should be able to negotiate these safely. Please note it may not always be possible to follow the itinerary exactly due to road works or weather etc, as things do not always go as planned. In these circumstances, you will be advised of alternative arrangements, you will need to be aware of the route each day. This information will be given to you before, or at the beginning of the holiday, and again at daily briefings.

Rest days

- Option for two rest days but you would miss the last leg on the final day.

Weather, clothing and culture

- Daytime temperatures-average high of 19-20degC
- Hopefully sunny. Suggest cycling top and shorts, with a lightweight waterproof. Suncream, lip balm and sunglasses.
- You will obviously need clothes for the evening and a lightweight towel and soap for the first night only, but what you bring is up to you, minimizing weight is essential for this hilly tour.



Maps and guides

- No route sheets will be provided as such, just print the maps as you see fit.
- GPX files will be provided before the start.
- Sustrans (Walk, Wheel Cycle Trust) route maps 8 North and 8, 42 South, show the full route.

Travel, insurance and vaccination

Travel insurance is not compulsory for UK nationals traveling in the UK.

Current Covid and Influenza vaccinations are recommended for participants of 75 years of age and over and those deemed medically vulnerable.

It is recommended that you are vaccinated against hepatitis A, typhoid, polio and tetanus and that protection has not expired. You should contact your doctor at least 3 months prior to travel to obtain these vaccinations and the latest advice for travellers.

Passport, visas and monies

Holders of non-UK passports are advised to check whether they require a visa.

Tour organiser contact details

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