



## WALES & THE WELSH BORDERS

### A JOURNEY THROUGH THE ANCIENT CELTIC KINGDOM

SEPTEMBER 9<sup>TH</sup> - 18<sup>TH</sup> 2021

Castle ruins, meandering medieval streets, and a magnificent Celtic heritage bring the beauty of Wales to life against a backdrop of rolling green hills and dramatic sea cliffs. Past and present coexist in this distinctive part of the world—the Romans mined for gold, the Tudors founded a dynasty, and the Normans built castles whose ancient remains are scattered along windy hilltops throughout the countryside. Along the way, Wales' ancient Celtic heritage was memorialized in a stunning collection of literature and artwork.

From the magnificence of Caernarfon to the breathtaking vistas on peaceful St. David's Peninsula, we'll explore the places, personalities, and sweep of history that constitute the haunting beauty of Wales.

We'll also step in and out of ancient market towns like Ludlow and Carmarthen, supposed birthplace of Merlin, located in "the garden of Wales" and visit beautiful villages like Hay-on-Wye, famous for its abundance of antique book stores, and ancient Shrewsbury, with more than 600 historic listed buildings and narrow medieval alleyways. We'll experience the natural splendor of Snowdonia, with the highest mountain peaks in the country, and the Wye Valley, rich in ancient woodlands, wildlife, and the idyllic setting for the timelessly romantic ruins of Tintern Abbey.

Join Discover Europe as we pay homage to great poets and storytellers and journey into the heart and history of ancient Wales. Let the magic of this Celtic kingdom come to life on *Wales & the Welsh Borders*.



SNOWDONIA



HARLECH CASTLE

#### THE COST OF THIS ITINERARY, PER PERSON, DOUBLE OCCUPANCY IS:

LAND ONLY (NO AIRFARE INCLUDED):	<b>\$4280</b>
SINGLE SUPPLEMENT:	<b>\$ 870</b>

*Airfares are available from many U.S. departure cities. Please call for details.*

#### THE FOLLOWING SERVICES ARE INCLUDED:

- HOTELS:** 8 nights' accommodation in first-class hotels, including all hotel taxes and service charges
- COACHING:** All ground transportation as detailed in the itinerary
- MEALS:** Breakfast daily, 5 dinners
- GUIDES:** Discover Europe tour guide throughout
- BAGGAGE:** Portage of one large suitcase per person
- ENTRANCES:** Entrance fees to all sites included in the itinerary

*Please note that travel insurance is not included on this tour.  
Insurance information will be mailed to each registration on receipt of deposit.*

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**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 9<sup>th</sup>** - Evening departure from U.S. for the overnight flight to Manchester. **OVERNIGHT: PLANE**

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 10<sup>th</sup>** - Upon arrival you will be transferred to our hotel in Conwy. There will be time to unpack and relax before we take a short tour of nearby Conwy Castle, built by Edward I between 1283 and 1289. This evening, we gather for a welcome dinner at the hotel. **(D) OVERNIGHT: CONWY**

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 11<sup>th</sup>** - A full day to explore the beauty of Snowdonia, from the diverse landscape of its national park (the second largest in Great Britain, with some of the highest peaks in the country) to its well-preserved medieval castles. We'll also visit the pastel-colored village of Portmeirion, built by Welsh architect Sir Clough Williams-Ellis from 1925 to 1975 off the coast of Snowdonia. Here, Renaissance Italy rubs shoulders with 18<sup>th</sup>-century England in a joyful jumble of architectural styles; it's also where the cult classic TV program *The Prisoner*, was filmed. Finally, we'll stop at Caernarfon Castle, a massive and commanding example of medieval fortification. We return to Conwy for a free evening. **(B) OVERNIGHT: CONWY**

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 12<sup>th</sup>** - Leaving our hotel, we head to Harlech Castle, linked in Welsh myth with the tragic heroine Branwen, of the *Mabinogion*, and set against a spectacular sea and mountain panorama. Continuing south along the coast of Cardigan Bay, we'll stop in Aberystwyth for lunch and some free time to explore. From Aberystwyth we explore inland, following the Vale of Rheidol to Devil's Bridge before turning south towards the ruins of Strata Florida Abbey. It's name means Vale of Flowers and it was an important religious site in the middle ages. From here we head to our hotel on the coast of Cardigan Bay. We'll have time to unpack and freshen up before we meet for dinner. **(B, D) OVERNIGHT: GWBERT**



ST. DAVID'S

**MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 13<sup>th</sup>** - With a full day to explore the haunting coastline on St. David's Peninsula, we head off to the birthplace of Wales' patron saint in the 6<sup>th</sup> century, a deeply peaceful Celtic corner of Wales. Quite apart from the purple-stone Cathedral and ruins of the Bishop's Palace at St. David's, the little peninsula is dotted with sites that possess a profundity and sanctity precisely because they have been ignored by the passing centuries. We meander along the south coast, stopping to visit Dylan Thomas's boathouse at Laugharne, to Swansea, where dinner awaits at our hotel. **(B, D) OVERNIGHT: SWANSEA**

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14<sup>th</sup>** - Enjoy a full day on the trail of Dylan Thomas in Swansea today. Swansea was where Dylan went to school and spent most of his early childhood, leaving in the early years of World War II. This morning we'll visit the Dylan Thomas Centre and then head to The Mumbles for lunch. There will be some free time this afternoon before we gather again for a tour of his birthplace museum. The evening is free. **(B) OVERNIGHT: SWANSEA**

**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15<sup>th</sup>** - Leaving Swansea, we continue along the south coast to Cardiff, the Welsh capital. We'll visit the National Museum of Wales, and have time here for lunch, before we head north through the Rhondda Valley to Hay-on-Wye. We'll check in to our hotel and possibly have time to investigate some of the book stores before dinner. **(B, D) OVERNIGHT: HAY-ON-WYE**



TINTERN ABBEY

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 16<sup>th</sup>** - We will spend today exploring the Wye Valley, rich in ancient woodlands, wildlife, and towns. The lower Wye Valley was the first "tourist attraction" in Britain, inspiring the Picturesque movement, which attracted such luminaries as Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Turner. We'll enjoy the beautiful river scenery and magnificent views, and spend time at Tintern Abbey and Chepstow Castle. The evening is free to sample a local restaurant. **(B) OVERNIGHT: HAY-ON-WYE**

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 17<sup>th</sup>** - We travel to Ludlow, described by *Country Life* as "the most vibrant small town in the country," with over 500 listed buildings. We'll have time to visit the castle, find a welcoming pub for lunch and explore the town before we end our day in the delightful village of Alderley Edge, where we'll enjoy a farewell dinner at our hotel. **(B, D) OVERNIGHT: ALDERLEY EDGE**

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 18<sup>th</sup>** - Morning transfers to Manchester Airport for return flights to the U.S. **(B)**

Key to included meals: **B** - breakfast, **D** - dinner