

GOOD TO KNOW

START/FINISH

Cardiff to Conwy, Wales

SEASON

All times of the year can be wet or windy, but the months from May to August have the highest chance of settled weather.

ACCOMMODATIONS

It is difficult to complete the Cambrian Way without camping. Most towns or villages have limited accommodations, but there are some hostels, notably YHA Brecon Beacons, Ty'n Cornel, and Pen-y-Pass. In remote sections, especially in the Cambrian Mountains, there are few options beyond wild camping. Although wild camping is not a legal right here, it has a long tradition and is widely tolerated if done discreetly. Pitch late, leave early, and leave no trace.

HIGHLIGHTS

1. The towers of Castell Coch near the start
2. Pen y Fan and the Brecon Beacons
3. The abbey ruins at Strata Florida
4. The ascents of Cadair Idris, the Rhinogydd, and Cnicht (the Welsh Matterhorn)

HELPFUL HINTS

WHAT TO BRING

Most hikers will need a backpack of around 60L capacity. Carry a tent capable of standing up to high winds

and heavy rain and a sleeping bag warm to around 5°C (41°F).

FOOTWEAR

The terrain varies—some stages are boggy, while others are rocky. Keeping your feet dry is likely to be difficult. Whatever footwear you choose, ensure you will be comfortable wearing it for long days with a heavy pack.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Cardiff and Conwy are both well served by train services.

NAVIGATION

It is advised to carry paper maps and a compass (and know how to use them) in addition to a GPS watch or handset, and have the route saved offline in a navigation app on your phone.

SAFETY

In remote country, the consequences of illness or injury could be severe. Carry a whistle and flashlight. A satellite communications device could also be useful in an emergency.

SUPPLIES

Not every village has a food store, so plan ahead. You will often need to carry food for several days at a time.

WATER

Water is plentifully available almost everywhere as there are countless streams. Treat or filter water if there is livestock around, and always at lower elevations.

BONUS TRACK

THE BEACONS WAY

At 158.8 km (98.7 mi) with 6,302 m (20,676 ft) of ascent, the Beacons Way is a challenging tour of the Black Mountains and Brecon Beacons that will take most hikers at least a week to complete. With plenty of summits and a lot of rough ground, it is another route best for experienced walkers. The route begins at Abergavenny in the east and finishes at Llangadog in the west. Although some sections coincide with the Cambrian Way, notably over the Pen y Fan ridges, it also explores other parts of the national park.

BACKGROUND

GELERT'S GRAVE

Legend has it that a stone monument at Beddgelert marks the last resting place of Gelert—faithful canine companion to Llywelyn the Great, a medieval Welsh prince. The story goes that Llywelyn believed the dog had killed his infant son when he saw Gelert's jaws dripping with blood and the cot empty. Enraged, the prince killed his dog—but the child was safe. Gelert had instead killed a wolf that threatened the boy. Filled with remorse, Llywelyn never smiled again.

FLORA & FAUNA

BLANKET BOG

A blanket bog is an area of peatland that forms in climates of high rainfall and low evapotranspiration, allowing peat to thrive not only in wet hollows but also over large expanses of undulating land. Blanket bogs play a vital role in the ecosystem. Their waterlogged peat absorbs vast quantities of rainwater, which helps prevent flooding while sequestering vast amounts of carbon. Despite its somewhat homogenous appearance, the blanket bog along the Cambrian Way includes over 300 species of moss and liverwort.

