

The Wales Way

A national touring route

A helpful guide for your tourism business



Ffordd Cymru
The Wales Way





The Wales Way is one of the most ambitious undertakings in our tourism action plan: a family of three routes, distinct but complementary, that grant access to the best of our nation. Together, they make up a powerful statement of what we value about Wales and how we wish to present ourselves to the world.

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The challenge:

Over the last 10 years we've made great strides together, but there's still more to do. Awareness of Wales in the world is still low. Even in the UK, there's still a legacy of outdated, negative preconceptions. To help put this right, Visit Wales has introduced a new long-term national route initiative — The Wales Way.

The vision:

The Wales Way is an inspiring symbol of confidence, boldness and ambition. It represents the best of Wales — our visitor experience, our hospitality and our attractions. Put simply, it embodies everything that makes Wales unique and internationally outstanding.

The objectives:

- Raise awareness of Wales in international markets.
- Attract longer stays, and higher spend, from both domestic and international visitors.
- Provide a marketing focal point for everyone in Wales who's involved in tourism.

Meet The Wales Way.

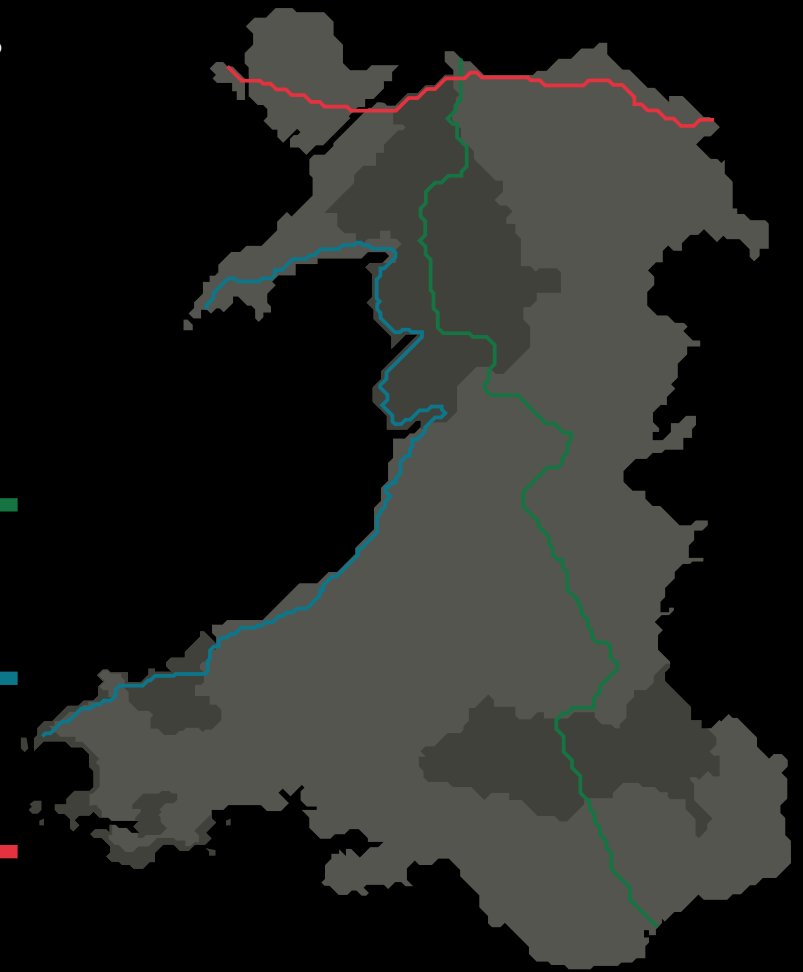
A series of three themed routes layered over pre-existing roads.

The Cambrian Way criss-crosses the spine of Wales for 185 miles (300km) between Llandudno and Cardiff, through National Parks and the Cambrian Mountains. The Coastal Way travels the west coast around Cardigan Bay, a 180-mile (290km) road-trip between the sea and mountains. The North Wales Way leads 75 miles (120km) past mighty castles into the island of Anglesey. Every step of the journey is a potential jumping-off point for further and deeper exploration — to go off-plan, or 'igam ogam'.

Ffordd Cambria
The Cambrian Way
A470

Ffordd yr Arfordir
The Coastal Way
predominantly A487

Ffordd y Gogledd
The North Wales Way
A55





A multi-modal network.

The Wales Way is much more than just a driving route. We must collectively promote enhanced connections to multiple modes of transport: rail, bus, bicycle, walking and riding trails.

The routes play an important role in highlighting more sustainable and accessible travel options into and around Wales. It's a means of focusing investment in our transport network in order to serve the needs of future visitors. It also encourages our own communities to make the most of what's on their doorstep, and connect with their local transport network, routes and trails.

Forming strategic partnerships with transport operators is a key priority for Visit Wales. We're continuing to engage with a range of transport partners — airports and airlines, port, ferry and cruise operators, and rail and bus companies serving Wales — to provide effective and targeted platforms for promoting tourism to our in-Wales, domestic UK and international audiences.

It's never been more important to bridge Wales physically to the world. The strength of our relationships with the UK and overseas, and improving our transport connectivity, will determine our ability to forge new markets and maintain and grow our position as an attractive and competitive place to visit.

Making the connection.

The Wales Coast Path, National Cycle Network, National Trails, Rail Network, Heart of Wales Line, Great Little Trains of Wales, TrawsCymru, National Parks buses, Eco Travel Network, Explore Wales Pass, canals and many more... all form car-free connections with The Wales Way.

Going ‘igam ogam’.
Rather than just passing through our landscapes and communities, the routes actively encourage the idea of going ‘igam ogam’ (zig-zag).

The Wales Way is a starting point to navigating Wales. The routes are densely packed with more reasons to be out of your car than inside it. Going ‘igam ogam’ (zig-zag) or off-piste from the main route is actively encouraged, as well as continually stopping to take in all that Wales has to offer along the way, discovering secret places off the beaten track.

The routes provide a planning baselayer: a short-cut to customising trips according to visitors’ interests. We should provide our visitors with a rich variety of special-interest journeys such as food, walking, cycling, adventure, wildlife, culture, heritage and faith itineraries.

A themed approach.
In line with the Years of Adventure, Legends and Sea, and combined with our content pillars of Adventure, Culture and Landscapes, we have broadly themed each route: Countryside, Coast, and Castles & Culture.

This gives a visitor who has low awareness or knowledge of Wales a ‘short cut’ to understanding the shape and scale of our landscapes, our world-class visitor experiences, and our language, culture and history.

Countryside
The Cambrian Way



Coast
The Coastal Way



Castles & Culture
The North Wales Way



Key marketing messages.

Selling The Wales Way to the world should be done through a strong identity and a consistent narrative.

These are the key points of difference between the three routes. All marketing and communications should support these unique messages and defining characteristics.

Fforðd Cymru The Wales Way

One epic journey, three distinct routes

Together, the three routes of The Wales Way showcase 420 miles of Wales’ most exceptional scenery. Each has its own distinct character — ‘countryside’, ‘coast’, and ‘castles & culture’.

Short, compact and intense

The Wales Way grants access to an amazing concentration of attractions in a small area. This is not a trip into the wilderness, but a tour on a manageable, human scale.

A starting point for exploration

The route is criss-crossed with chances to take a detour or go ‘igam ogam’ — whether on a long-distance cycle path, the Wales Coast Path, a heritage railway or even a boat trip to an offshore island.

Not just for motorists

This is not a journey to be taken at speed. At every turn, visitors should be encouraged to leave the car. All three of the routes are accessible on foot and by public transport.

Fforðd Cambria The Cambrian Way

An epic journey from coast to coast

Between Wales’ northern and southern coasts, The Cambrian Way takes visitors down the mountainous spine of the nation. At 185 miles, it’s both the longest of the routes and the most varied in scenery.

The greatest adventure playground

Snowdonia is world-famous for hill-walking and mountaineering. More recently, it has become a pioneering adventure playground. There are further opportunities to get active throughout the route: mountain-biking in the Brecon Beacons, kitesurfing at Llandudno and kayaking at Cardiff International White Water.

A glimpse into the heart of Wales

The route takes you to the heart of wild Wales: with big Dark Skies and vast open spaces. As well as Snowdonia and the Brecon Beacons, visitors can discover the exceptional beauty of the Cambrian Mountains and Elenydd.

Discover villages, market towns, spa resorts and cities

The wild splendour is punctuated by historic settlements, sleepy villages and bustling market towns. The Victorian town of Llandudno and the modern city of Cardiff mark the two ends of the route.

Fforðd yr Arfordir Coastal Way

The off-road road trip

This is a route that takes in the entire curve of Cardigan Bay. It shadows the Wales Coast Path, the world’s only long-distance footpath to follow the coastline of a whole nation — providing the visitor with more reasons to be out of the car than inside it.

The splendour of the mountains

It’s not all about the rugged coastline. The inland scenery is equally spectacular, with Snowdonia — including Cader Idris — and the Cambrian Mountains standing sentinel over the sea.

A chance to discover maritime Wales

Marine wildlife is a big draw — not just the famous dolphins of Cardigan Bay, but seals, puffins and a profusion of birdlife. There’s also the chance to travel to offshore islands such as Bardsey and Ramsey.

Castles, cathedrals and heritage

The end points of Aberdaron and St Davids are ancient pilgrimage destinations and along the way take in Criccieth, Harlech and Cardigan castles as well as the Italianate village of Portmeirion and the lively university town of Aberystwyth, where the National Library of Wales is a cultural highlight.

Fforðd y Gogledd The North Wales Way

A short trip through the centuries

Though it’s only 75 miles, this east–west trip traverses thousands of years of history along a trading route once used by the Romans. From St Winefride’s Well to Llanberis Slate Museum and the Celtic monoliths of Anglesey, it takes in every period of Wales’ rich history.

The greatest concentration of castles

There’s no region on earth with so many great castles in such a small area. The most famous form a UNESCO World Heritage site: Beaumaris, Caernarfon, Conwy and Harlech. The native Welsh princes left gems like Bodolwyddan and Dolbadarn, while later generations built grand country houses like Plas Newydd and Penrhyn Castle.

An insight into the Welsh language and its culture

North West Wales is a stronghold of the Welsh language. Visitors will hear it used every day in shops and on the streets. Bangor is a lively university town where many residents are fluent in Welsh — locals and students alike.

Family-friendly attractions

The North Wales Way is compact and manageable and so a great choice for travellers with children. It’s within easy reach of Snowdonia and a wealth of family-friendly attractions such as Anglesey Sea Zoo and GreenWood Family Park. There are fine beaches along the coastline for picnics, sandcastles and paddling.

National and regional partnerships.

Visit Wales, local authorities and tourism businesses across Wales are working together to capitalise on the opportunities presented by The Wales Way.

Partnership projects have created itineraries, maps and thematic trails to make it easier for tourists to navigate their journey along the three core routes. Marketing initiatives — nationally, regionally and locally — are collectively showcasing the wealth of visitor experiences available through The Wales Way and are already gaining international exposure.

Visit Wales and Aston Martin brand partnership

In 2017 Aston Martin announced St Athan as a manufacturing base for their new DBX model. Subsequently a strong brand partnership was developed between Visit Wales and Aston Martin, resulting in the production of quality brand photography and films featuring an Aston Martin on The North Wales Way.

During the high-profile launch of The Wales Way at ExCel in London, a joint branded ‘take over’ featuring the red Aston Martin set against a large cinema screen back drop of The Wales Way footage, created significant global interest and media attention.

Visit Wales and KLM marketing partnership

This project saw a collaboration between Visit Wales, KLM (Royal Dutch Airlines), Cardiff Airport and tour operators in the Netherlands and Germany, by combining The Wales Way travel itineraries, tied to direct KLM flights to Cardiff and distributed via the campaign websites [OntdekWales.nl](#) and [ErlebeWales.de](#). The partnership provided Tour Operators with easily accessible bookable itineraries for potential visitors to Wales.

“To KLM, this unique sales and awareness collaboration has proven to be of significant added value to our Amsterdam–Cardiff flights which is clearly reflected in our Performance Reporting systems.”

Hugo van Joolen
Air France — KLM Global Sales & Commercial Partnerships
Director, Tourism & Destination Development

Travel trade activity

The travel trade team at Visit Wales focus on growing the sales of Wales holidays through tour operator programmes. They attend / exhibit at key trade shows and business-to-business (B2B) workshops; host familiarisation visits; provide itineraries, product information and updates. The Wales Way has given the team a strong new proposition to sell to operators. Latest figures report that 130 new Wales tours / programmes were created in 2018; 75 by European operators, 55 from outside Europe.

For more information on working with the travel trade, see pages 36–37.

The Coastal Way: Joint marketing campaign*

This cross-county project saw Pembrokeshire, Ceredigion and Gwynedd working together to improve seasonality, increase tourism spend and target first-time visitors by delivering two main elements — content creation, in the form of itineraries, video, images, editorial copy and promotional materials; and a multi-channel marketing campaign targeting the international tourism market.

Blas Cambrian Taste: Food trail map*

Blas Cambrian Taste is an initiative promoting local food and drink businesses along The Cambrian Way from Cardiff to Llandudno. It is divided into four main areas and includes places to buy and experience local food and drink including shops, delis, producers, markets, food festivals, cafés, pubs, restaurants and food and drink experiences.

The map also shows other food and drink areas of interest within a 40-minute journey of the A470.

The North Wales Way: Local route development*

The four destination management areas in North Wales joined forces to carry out a series of workshops and an online questionnaire to gather tourism providers’ ideas about possible local routes linking to The North Wales Way. This led to the production of seven interactive, downloadable maps spanning the whole of the region, featuring key attractions, viewing points and scenic multi-modal travel options to complement signature experiences along the main route.

*These projects have received funding via the Regional Tourism Engagement Fund (RTEF) / Toursim Innovation Product Fund (TIPF) and are supported through the Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014–2020, which is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and the Welsh Government. The fund aims to improve the visitor experience and create stronger destinations by working together.

Friends of The Wales Way.



The Rocks at Plas Curig
Hostel in Capel Curig, Snowdonia

Husband and wife Christian and Annie run Wales’ only Independent 5* hostel, which is also dog-friendly. Passionate about promoting their region to the rest of the world, they helped develop local route maps linking to The North Wales Way — which they’re now proud to share with their customers.

“10,000+ people, from all over the world, stay with us every year. We’re frequently asked by visitors about places to see and things to do. The Wales Way is a great way to signpost them and the local route maps are a really useful asset for us to share.”

Christian & Annie Wynne
Owners

The Hours
Café, bookshop & deli, Brecon

Located in a quirky green listed building in the flagship town of the Brecon Beacons National Park, The Hours is the perfect spot to sit, relax and unwind. The café offers delicious freshly prepared homemade food and the deli next door proudly showcases the very best of Welsh produce — it is one of the many excellent food destinations on the Blas Cambrian Taste trail.

“The Wales Way is just a brilliant idea — it connects north and south via a real commitment to good food & drink while at the same time promoting our shared sense of identity and heritage. By working together with other like-minded businesses both locally and across Wales, we can add real passion and value to the visitor experience along these three epic routes through our country.”

Leigh Hendra
Co-owner



Pronto
Motorhome hire company, Caerphilly

Naunton Dickins has been an advocate of The Wales Way since day one. His company, Pronto Motorhome Hire, now promotes a dedicated ‘Motorhome The Wales Way’ travel guide, encouraging their customers to follow one — or more — of the three core routes.

“The adventure touring market is one of the fastest growing tourism sectors and I see a great fit between that, The Wales Way and luxury motorhome hire. Motorhomes offer a fantastic way to experience our stunning country and The Wales Way is the ideal starting point for visitors to explore. It therefore makes perfect sense to dovetail our product development and marketing initiatives with Visit Wales’ campaigns.”

Naunton Dickins
Managing Director



Global inspiration.

We're not reinventing the wheel here. We know that national routes work, because they've been tried and tested in many other countries.

There are major iconic national routes such as Route 66 in the USA, the Great Ocean Road in Australia, and the Garden Route in South Africa. But we've focussed our research on smaller countries that we can compare and contrast with Wales.

We're lucky to have some excellent examples to draw from. They offer valuable 'lessons learned', as well as an indication of the impact that national routes can have — especially in attracting international visitors.

One thing that all of these routes share is their ability to inspire and encourage visitors, offering blueprints for taking in the best of what each destination has to offer.

Norway

Norwegian Scenic Routes



Photo: Trine Kanter Zerwekh / Statens vegvesen

The 18 Norwegian Scenic Routes cover a total length of around 1,327 miles (2,136km). They take in some of Norway's most breathtaking scenery, and feature spectacular mountains, fjords and waterfalls. The visitor experience is enhanced by innovative architecture and works of art as designated viewpoints and picnic areas. Around 200 installations will be completed by the end of the project in 2024.

92% economic growth in tourism trade on Scenic Route Rondane, 2007–2015.

80% growth on Scenic Route Varanger, 2010–2015.

Main learning points:

It is a 30-year project (1994–2024) based on a long-term, multi-agency vision that transcends government terms, tourism strategies, national transport plans and budgets. The project brings together 10 county administrations and 60 municipalities as well as local businesses.

All 18 routes offer world-class experiences, combining the natural environment with art installations and architecture as viewing points and rest areas.

The distinct identities of individual routes are celebrated and promoted, yet tied together by strong basic elements — such as mountains, fjords, waterfalls and coastline — and marketed as a collective tourism product.

Rest areas and public facilities along the routes, as well as the roads themselves, are improved and maintained, with clear distribution of responsibility between local and national partners.

“The tourists’ expectations are high. The installations have to be operated and maintained, and both the government and the county administrations are prepared to contribute. We must also make sure that the experience of landscape is preserved when roads are improved for better mobility and safety. Local food, accommodation and activities must also be of the highest quality.”

Terje Moe Gustavsen

Director General — Norwegian Public Roads Administration, 2007–2019

Ireland Wild Atlantic Way



Photo: Alison Crummy

Launched by Fáilte Ireland in 2014, the Wild Atlantic Way is the world's longest defined coastal touring route. It winds along 1,600 miles (2,600km) of Ireland's Atlantic coastline, embracing six distinct regions and nine counties.

Main learning points:

The Wild Atlantic Way was embedded within the national tourism vision and strategy for Ireland.

The support and energy of local communities and businesses nurtured a true sense of ownership and enthusiasm at grassroots level.

The route features 188 Discovery Points — places that offer visitors an authentic and intimate experience of the landscape and seascape.

There are also 15 Signature Discovery Points — iconic, must-see places that offer an opportunity for an extended stay. All Discovery Points are easily accessible by rural roads, have an existing car park or lay-by, as well as interpretation panels and photo points.

The programme is supported by comprehensive monitoring and operational management plans. Fáilte Ireland works closely with local authorities to maintain and enhance the quality of Discovery Points, with clear service level agreements whenever work is carried out.

3.8m overseas tourists and 4.4m domestic trips in 2018 — with a combined spend of €3bn.

Full case study:
bit.ly/2uEyqQA

“In just four years, the Wild Atlantic Way has captured the imagination of visitors both home and abroad. This is very much testament to the strong partnership between our industry and the Wild Atlantic Way team in Fáilte Ireland.”

Miriam Kennedy
Head of the Wild Atlantic Way

Scotland North Coast 500



Photo: Mark Appleton Photography

Launched in 2015 by North Highland Initiative, the North Coast 500 (NC500) is a 516-mile (830km) circular route which begins and ends at Inverness Castle. The route follows the main roads along the coastal edges of the North Highlands of Scotland.

Main learning points:

The North Coast 500 rapidly gained global attention which translated into thousands more visitors to the North Highlands. It is frequently listed among the world's top tourist routes and has been described as 'Scotland's Route 66'.

The NC500 created a tourism offering that linked all parts of the North Highlands under a confident and outward-looking brand. Now owned by North Coast 500 Ltd, the limited company structure is driven by the founding goal of achieving economic impacts for communities and businesses. It's underpinned by a commercial strategy including membership, corporate sponsors and partners, public and private investors, and merchandise.

Although regarded by many as a driving route, NC500 is also known as a challenge for endurance cyclists. This has helped widen the route's appeal as well as generate additional interest and profile.

News stories in 2019 have suggested that NC500 has become almost too popular, bringing traffic congestion and inconvenience to residents. This hasn't gone unnoticed by Visit Wales: it's a central part of our strategy to spread the visitor load fairly, and to encourage multi-modal transport.

29,000 more visitors to the Highlands in NC500's first year, adding £9m to the regional economy.

86% of hotels, 78% of food and drink businesses, 70% of activity providers reported an increase in trade; average sales increase in trade of 15–20%.

“In our initial benchmarking, the North Coast 500 stands out as one of the most successful and innovative tourism developments in the world in recent years.”

John Lindquist
The Boston Consulting Group & Visit Britain

New Zealand Themed Highways

New Zealand's 10 Themed Highways feature both looped and point-to-point routes, all with clearly themed names such as the Pacific Coast, Surf, Volcanic Loop, Thermal Explorer and Forgotten World. Each route is also clearly way-marked with distinctive brown signs.

England The Great West Way

Led by VisitWiltshire, this 125-mile route runs along a corridor west of London through to Bristol. It aims to enhance visitor experience along the way, and be suitable for visitors to travel by car, coach, rail, cycling, walking or by boat.

“When a visitor has a finite number of days to visit a country, national routes are a proven way to start researching and planning a trip. They provide a reassuring ‘short cut’ to increasing a visitor’s understanding of a country.”

Bethan Wicks
Visit Wales



The benefits.

What can we learn from these examples? Quite a lot, as it turns out. The evidence suggests that tourism routes bring many benefits.

Here are some of them:

- Provides a strong year-round offer and improves shoulder-season visitor numbers.
- Gives a reason to stay longer and explore beyond the route.
- Encourages tourists to explore less-visited areas.
- Going ‘off the beaten track’ is a common motivation of independent travellers.
- Routes provide a point of orientation from which to explore more deeply.
- Provides clear point of difference to help visitor pick from a broad menu of choice.
- Disperses visitor spend through a wider area.
- Helps to support new tourism businesses regionally.
- Provides a starting point for developing bespoke itineraries and excursions.
- Aligns with target markets and travel agents’ needs.
- Themed itineraries become a key tactical focus for content and marketing plans.
- Tourism routes provide a useful hook for generating media coverage.
- Routes become a focus of destination ranking surveys and ‘must do’ lists in travel publications.
- Provides a basis for developing signature events.
- Aligns to wider governmental strategies and initiatives.
- Allows local businesses a sense of ownership: they own it, love it, are proud of it.
- Private funding initiatives emerge.
- Merchandising opportunities.

Friends of The Wales Way.

Twr y Felin Hotel

Hotel and restaurant, St Davids

Built in 1806 as a working windmill, Twr y Felin today offers award-winning luxury accommodation and double rosette restaurant. Sitting at The Coastal Way's most southerly tip, it offers explorers a comfortable venue to start or finish their journey along the route.

"The Wales Way is absolutely fantastic, and it's just what Wales has needed. This is now an opportunity for tourism and hospitality providers, as well as attractions, to really connect and to place Wales on an international platform to attract more and more visitors."

Paula Ellis
Group General Manager



Portmeirion Village

Tourism attraction, Penrhynedeudraeth

Built by Welsh architect Sir Clough Williams-Ellis, Portmeirion Village has become one of Wales' most popular tourist destinations. Recognising the value of the international tourism market, they are strong advocates of The Wales Way and are proud to be situated along The Coastal Way route.

"We're looking to work very closely with The Wales Way because we think it's a wonderful brand which has great potential. It will show how great the accessibility is here in Wales. We feel certain that The Wales Way will grow and increase the interest in Wales, not only among domestic but also international tourists wanting to come here."

Meurig Jones
Location Manager

Cardigan Castle

Tourism attraction, Ceredigion

Behind the medieval walls at Cardigan Castle, a signature point along The Coastal Way, lay 900 years of history waiting to be discovered. The Castle proudly tells the story of Wales through a multi-experience tourism offering which includes exhibitions, events, food and accommodation.

"The Wales Way helps package this part of Wales, so you have all the different elements — whether it be cultural, historical or the more adventure-based tourism. It's great for both small businesses and bigger promoters of Wales as it allows the market to appeal to anybody and to draw people to the area who might not necessarily come here otherwise."

Jac Davies
Director



Talyllyn Railway

Tourism attraction, North West Wales

Known as 'The Railway with a Heart of Gold', Talyllyn Railway is the first preserved railway in the world. The line opened over 150 years ago, and continues to transport modern-day visitors from Tywyn to Abergynolwyn, through some of Snowdonia's most breathtaking landscape. It is featured as one of the highlights along The Coastal Way.

"We're very excited about The Wales Way as it encourages tourists to venture off the beaten track to experience the beautiful Welsh countryside — which is exactly what we do. The routes promote co-marketing between businesses and individual destinations, which helps us all capitalise on the growing number of people visiting Wales."

Daniel King
Marketing Manager



Wales Way thinking.

We're all ambassadors for our home patch. By getting to know The Wales Way, you can open up new ways for visitors to enjoy the very best of what we've got to offer.

Get to know the routes: where they go, how they interconnect, and their attractions and highlights. Learn about your own local route, especially.

Become a local expert. You'll be providing vital insider knowledge — the personal touch and hidden gems that no guidebook can provide.

Talk about the route when you welcome guests. Ask them, 'Are you doing The Wales Way?' It's a great way to introduce our national route to someone who's never heard of it.

Always refer to your proximity to The Wales Way in your promotional print and digital materials.

Be a tourist for a day in your own back yard. Take your staff on a familiarisation trip to explore first-hand how the international visitor might experience your area.

Offer bespoke local knowledge to all types of visitor: families, couples, foodies, dog owners and less mobile visitors.

Make connections to the core routes by highlighting looped walking, cycling and riding trails. Looped itineraries will be a priority development area over the course of the programme.

Here’s a test.
Imagine a tourist arrives at your business.
They’re doing The Wales Way, and they ask
these questions. Can you — and your staff —
provide answers?

01.

What’s suitable for children along the route?
02.

What landmarks or points of interest should we look out for?
03.

Are there any iconic castles, gardens and cultural attractions along the route?
04.

Are there scenic loops I can take that bring me back to the main route?
05.

Where are the great viewpoints?
06.

Is it easy to park, and accessible for wheelchairs or buggies?
07.

What unique local food and drink should we be sampling along the route?
08.

What are the names of mountain ranges that we’re passing through?
09.

What rivers will we cross?
10.

What do the local Welsh names mean in English?
11.

What wildlife is unique to this area?
12.

How close are we to the National Cycling Network?
13.

How close are we to a local walking route or National Trail?
14.

How close are we to the Wales Coast Path?
15.

Are there any events or festivals happening in this area during our stay?





Look to the future.

These are early days. The Wales Way is a 10-year initiative, so think about forward planning. It's not just about how you could benefit in the short term, but in the years ahead.

Connect and network.

Present yourself to visitors as a strong community that welcomes tourists and works together to ensure their stay is memorable. Create an 'off-shoots' route that takes in other tourist businesses and points of interest. Develop a map.

Plan for evolving demands.

The share of the global population over 60 will double in the next 35 years. At the same time, Millennials and Generation Z are the markets of the future.

Create experiences.

We're seeing a global shift to 'Experience' products. Journalists and influencers are constantly requesting wholly authentic, unique and life-changing experiences. They're looking beyond the ordinary to create shareable stories.

Create a sense of belonging.

Engaging visitors in local classes and community events will enrich their experience, making them feel a part of the community — not an outsider — while they're there.

Become an amateur holiday guide.

Tell a great story — this will enhance the memories you create for visitors, and build loyalty.

Our language makes us unique.

Millennials are positively inclined to embrace new languages. They want to see, hear and try speaking Welsh.

Learn from the best.

Familiarise yourself with how it's been successfully achieved in other countries.

Friends of The Wales Way.

Celticos

Guided tour operator, North West Wales

Celticos have created a business taking visitors across Wales on customised private guided day tours and multi-day stays. Their packages include themed and special-interest itineraries, many of which loop and interweave with The Wales Way routes which are promoted through their website.

“Our customers are looking for a taste of the real Wales — our language, culture, heritage and landscape. They want to be taken to some of our nation’s hidden gems as well as the more iconic spots, and this is what The Wales Way is all about. Businesses like ours can leverage massive benefits from the international marketing opportunity offered by The Wales Way.”

Alwyn Griffith
Managing Director



Zip World

Adventure tourism business, North Wales

Zip World have created ‘The Adventure Highway’ based on a route linking their 3 iconic sites in North Wales. Straddling The North Wales Way and The Cambrian Way, it’s an ideal tool for ‘igam ogam’ exploration — and a great example of how businesses can create their own routes and itineraries.

“We want to develop The Adventure Highway further to include more businesses and points of interest so that our customers are encouraged to extend their stay and enjoy all the amazing things our area has to offer. Having an internationally focussed initiative like The Wales Way to push this further can only be a good thing.”

Andrew Hudson
Director



Hawarden Estate Farm Shop

Farm shop & café, Flintshire

The Hawarden Estate Farm Shop, located on a historic and beautiful Estate in Flintshire, is the first signature experience on The North Wales Way. They offer visitors a stop-off point at the start of their adventure across the region with a lively café, butchers, deli & food hall, takeaway sandwich bar, as well as children’s play area, events space and pick-your-own farm.

“It really benefits us to be on The North Wales Way. With more and more people stopping with us, and exploring the wider area, we have confidence in growing the business and expanding our events programme to give people a real taste of our region’s world-class food, culture and environment.”

Vicky Gladstone
Events Manager



Are you international ready?

International visitors come to experience Welsh culture — but it's also worth taking a moment to understand our guests' culture.

Visitors from, say, the USA, Japan, Germany and India often have vastly different cultural norms on... well, almost everything: eye contact, directness, informality, humour, personal space, timekeeping, alcohol and food. There'll be different cultural attitudes to politics, history, religion, gender, age, dress and status. Even so, not everyone conforms to their national stereotype. Each person, wherever they come from, is an individual. Just like us. Vive la difference!

Timing.

Early starts or late starts? 'Early' can mean 7am or 11am, depending on culture.

Punctuality.

Some cultures are laid back; others are very punctual and expect others to be.

Pace.

Eastern markets typically enjoy a faster pace than Western Hemisphere travellers.

Food.

Vegetarian, vegan, Jain, halal, kosher — many cultures have strict dietary rules.

International tourists: the benefits.

There are plenty of good reasons to attract international travellers. Here are just some of them.

International travellers can address seasonality. They also tend to travel across the week, rather than being weekend-driven.

They spend more: on average, three times more than domestic travellers on each trip.

Lead times to book are longer giving more time to plan your business.

International visitors take back positive messages about Wales as a place to live, work and do business. They become an army of ambassadors.

Working across a range of domestic and international markets can spread the risk from fluctuations or changes from any one market.

The facts:

- Tourism generates £6.3 billion annually to the Welsh economy, creating jobs and boosting economic growth.
- International visitors to Wales spent £405 million in 2018.
- International visitors stay longer and spend more: average spend per trip is £430, compared to £185 for GB domestic.
- Ireland provides the highest volume of visits to Wales, followed by France, Germany and the United States.

Know your market.
The Wales Way is a great opportunity to target the higher-spending international visitor. These are pen-portraits of an average Near European and North American visitor as targeted by Visit Wales.

Near European Target Markets	USA Target Markets	Domestic Market
<p>Buzzseekers 18–45 Young and curious to explore the world and different cultures, and eager to learn and discover. They place more importance on authentic experiences and adventures than visiting the classic landmarks. That’s why their approach to holiday planning is flexible and spontaneous.</p> <p>Explorers 45–65+ Well educated and well travelled. Their goal is to deepen their knowledge and learn as much as they can from their holiday. Therefore everything is carefully thought of in advance. They enjoy experiencing and understanding the local culture. They focus on visiting the famous iconic places — however they’re also very keen on experiencing nature.</p>	<p>Buzzseekers 18–45 Driven and active, this highly sociable group look for action-packed adventure holidays. They are competitive and like to show off, but also have a genuine interest in the places they visit, their history, culture and people. Hugely reliant on social media, this group will ask for ideas and suggestions from all their friends (which they will seek to out-do) as well as sharing all their experiences afterwards.</p> <p>Sightseers 45–65+ Relatively affluent and with plenty of time on their hands, this group is making the most of opportunities to travel, exploring new places and re-visiting much-loved regions they have not had the time to see during their busy careers. Educated and sophisticated, they have a keen interest in history, culture and the arts, and choose holidays that are intellectually challenging, with a touch of indulgence and upmarket luxury.</p>	<p>Visit Wales’ domestic Target Market Segments share a common attitude towards holiday taking. They are, in broad terms, ‘Independent Explorers’, which break down by market segment — eg, Family Active Explorers, Active Explorers groups and couples, Scenic Explorer couples.</p>

Digital content.
High-quality images and video of your tourism business are vital for web, social and digital media engagement.

<p>The devil’s in the detail. When using models, avoid branded clothing, and keep it plain and simple to avoid the shots looking dated over time.</p> <p>Be aware of the GDPR rules. When people are visible and recognisable you’ll need consent to use and distribute the image — often via a signed release form.</p> <p>Avoid jaunty angles. Locked off and straight forward points of view work best.</p> <p>Avoid excessive filters and effects. Authentic and honest is what the discerning traveller is looking for.</p> <p>Drone shoots. These are a very current way to present your product. Always use a licensed drone photographer.</p> <p>Cinegraphs. Growing in popularity, these are high definition images that contain a subtle element of movement.</p> <p>Always caption. Add detailed locations to photography.</p>
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Working with the industry.

A range of organisations operate as intermediaries in the travel industry. These typically include: travel agents, tour operators, online travel agencies (OTAs), Destination Management Companies (DMCs), event planners and incentive houses.

These organisations are also referred to as ‘buyers’. Wales-based businesses such as accommodation, attractions, tour guides and activity providers are known as ‘suppliers’. At Visit Wales, the travel trade team facilitates business between suppliers and buyers.

If you’d like to generate additional sales, to increase your visitor numbers and fill spare capacity, you may want to consider working with the leisure travel trade. Here are some quick wins to get you started.

- Provide all relevant details to the product database on [visitwales.com](https://www.visitwales.com)
- Use our hashtags #TravelTradeWales #MeetInWales and follow us @VisitWalesTrade @MeetInWales.
- Tell us about your product and update us with stories, good quality content, and new developments (productnews@gov.wales) so that we can feature it on our websites, on social channels, in our PR work, and in conversation with potential travel trade intermediaries and buyers.
- Get yourself listed (free) on VisitBritain’s online Supplier Directory.
- Use VisitBritain’s hashtag #lovegreatbritain and follow their social channels.

- Support our and VisitBritain’s familiarisation and media trips programmes for visiting buyers and media.
- Attend events or exhibitions to meet with the travel trade.
- Work together with others in your region or product type to present and promote your offer.
- Consider membership of professional bodies to provide you with a ready network of contacts and events to meet them through — UKinbound, European Tour Operators Association, etc.

Top tips for working with the travel trade.

Travel professionals aren’t your average consumer — so it’s worth investing a little time in learning what makes them tick.

- Make their lives easy.**
Operators may be working with a multitude of businesses and itineraries in a high-pressured office. If you’re easy to work with, they’ll love you for it.
- Respond quickly.**
First come, first served. And bear in mind any international time differences: their working day might be your night-time.
- Early birds.**
Work out your rates, make them favourable, eg, travel trade rates, and offer the opportunity to book in tours and incentives, as early as possible — operators make bookings up to two years in advance.
- Play the long game.**
You may have contact with operators and event planners now but the booking may not be made for a couple of years. It’s a long-term opportunity.
- Know your market.**
The distribution channels in each market vary, so if you’re targeting a specific market it’s important to understand the landscape.
- Plain speaking.**
Not all operators are first-language English speakers, so make sure that any copy / emails, etc, are easy to understand and do not include slang, acronyms or idioms.

- Mind your language.**
Offer information in multiple languages at guest accommodation, attractions, venues and hotels.
- Add value.**
For group and incentive visits, consider offering additional value, eg, tours with the gardener, or an introduction to the meal by the chef. Depending on what you offer, you could charge for this opportunity, too.
- Perfect timing.**
Advise them on how long is needed at your site, so operators can build their itineraries accordingly. Normally they’d allow an hour — although it varies depending on the size of the attraction and any added value you can offer.
- Work together.**
Collaborate with other local businesses who are travel trade and business events friendly. It’s easier for an operator to work with one business than many.
- The personal touch.**
If you’re hosting a familiarisation or an educational visit, welcome the operators and planners personally, and explain what you can offer to the travel trade, event planners and for incentives — and don’t forget to share contact details.



Seeing the big picture.
Everything we do fits into a wider
set of national values. It's all about
doing the right thing.

Accessibility Did you know one in five people in the UK have an impairment, which may affect where they stay or visit? An Accessibility Guide can help you to communicate your facilities and services to disabled people. bit.ly/2MTAAWt	Inbound tourism toolkit This guide is designed to provide you with the basic tools, knowledge and key contacts needed to enter the inbound tourism market. bit.ly/2RRf6l9	TrawsCymru bus service TrawsCymru long-distance bus network is an important part of the public transport network in Wales. It's free on weekends and is an excellent way to explore The Wales Way through an accessible, affordable and environmentally friendly way. trawscymru.info
Developing a sense of place Lots of things make Wales feel Welsh. You can explore ideas around identity to help create a sense of place for your business and to embed its roots into your local story. bit.ly/31GRtao	Photography Marketing images should show our country in an honest, real and original way. Follow this link for more information: bit.ly/2XjQHRm An extensive collection of high-quality photographic imagery is available for approved use via Wales on View. walesonview.com	Wales Coast Path toolkit A free, online resource which has been designed to help coastal businesses market their business by using the pulling power of the Wales Coast Path. bit.ly/2WRskuQ
Food strategy Food is an essential part of the tourism offer in Wales, arguably because it provides the most common point of contact with visitors. Make sure you get it right with our range of toolkits. bit.ly/2lpfY4j	Promoting safe adventures There are many ways you can incorporate the Adventure Smart Wales messages in the information you provide for your customers. The messages and materials are free to use and include three short videos, posters and a business toolkit. adventuresmart.uk	Well-being of Future Generations Act To create a more sustainable Wales, public bodies must work towards seven Well-being Goals and enact the five Ways of Working listed here: futuregenerations.wales
Green travel For the eco-conscious traveller, it's a dilemma: how to enjoy wild places and yet leave the lightest of footprints. This is a sample itinerary: bit.ly/31EU7NP Encourage your visitors to explore Wales by using public transport where possible. traveline.cymru	Refill Wales An award-winning campaign designed to help reduce plastic pollution. It's easy for visitors to find the nearest water refill station by logging into their App. Use this as an opportunity along The Wales Way to make visitors stop at your business to refill. refill.org.uk/Refill-Wales	Welsh language Our language is unique to us, so try to use little bits of Welsh around your customers. There are Welsh in Business officers who can help you, free of charge, to use more Welsh in your business. bit.ly/2ISxLj4

Investing in your product.

It's crucial that we keep increasing and improving the products, events and experiences that attract visitors to Wales. We support innovative ideas and projects that help this to become a reality.

We welcome the opportunities that 'Years of' Campaigns have brought, encouraging tourism businesses to develop new and existing products, campaigns, experiences and long-term sustainable events.

Throughout the year, all across Wales, we want to see bigger and better world-class events and experiences, each backed up by a wealth of supporting attractions on the ground. We want to see businesses using The Wales Way as a catalyst to work together to ensure visitors have a seamless, joined-up experience.

Our funding schemes.

There are various funding schemes that can help you bring your ideas to life, both Capital and Revenue support. For more information on our funding schemes go to: businesswales.gov.wales/tourism/finance

To discuss capital project ideas, contact: tourism.industryadvice@gov.wales
0845 010 8020

To discuss revenue project ideas, contact your regional officer:
South West Wales
Philip.Abraham@gov.wales
0300 025 4528

South East Wales
Louisa.Giles@gov.wales
0300 061 6012

Mid Wales
Helen.Jones28@gov.wales
0300 025 7424

North Wales
AndrewWallace.Forfar@gov.wales
0300 062 5837

More ways to get involved.

The Wales Way is part of a wider strategy, and Visit Wales is one of many stakeholders in its success.

Follow @visitwales to see what content we are posting.

Follow @VisitWalesBiz to keep up to date on what's happening in the industry in Wales.

Tag your social media posts with #fforddcymru and #thewalesway.

For new products and events that you would like Visit Wales to know about, email productnews@gov.wales

Keep up to date on news and opportunities by signing up to the Visit Wales Industry e-newsletter. businesswales.gov.wales/tourism

Go to walesonview.com to access free high-quality images or email imagesupport@gov.wales

Engage with your local tourism destination partnership and / or Tourism Association.

Support Visit Wales' annual thematic approach. 2019 Year of Discovery: businesswales.gov.wales/tourism/2019-year-discovery

thewalesway.com
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