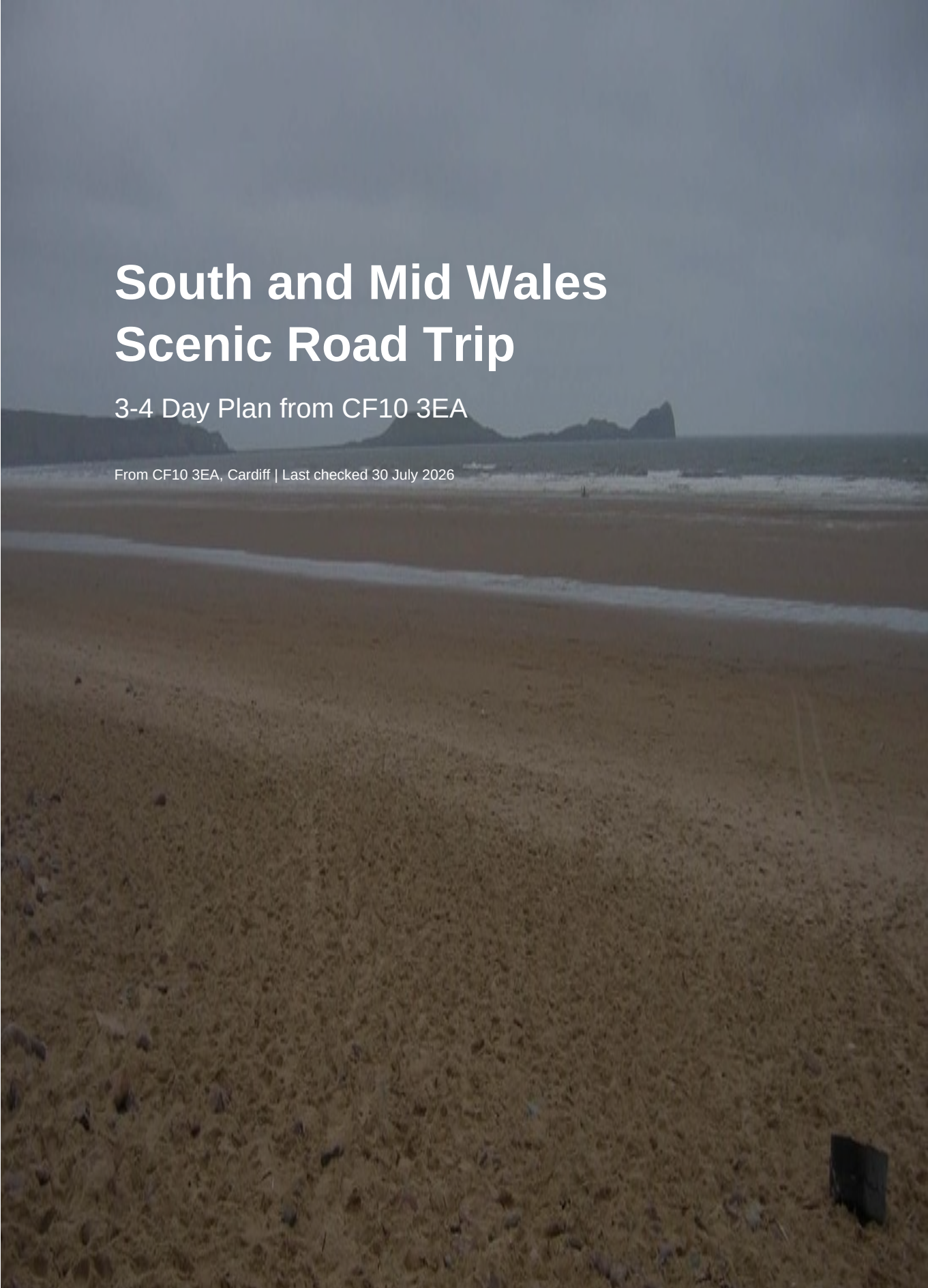




# South and Mid Wales Scenic Road Trip

3-4 Day Plan from CF10 3EA

From CF10 3EA, Cardiff | Last checked 30 July 2026

# Trip Overview

A compact road-trip plan from central Cardiff linking high Beacons summits, glacial valleys, remote reservoirs, coastal cliffs, two major castles and the Elan Valley dam landscape. Distances and timings are realistic road estimates, not straight-line distances; traffic, weather, tides and rural-road conditions can change them materially.

Beach

Castle

Reservoir

Mountain

Valley

Canal

Engineering structure

Scenic viewpoint

Coastal landscape

National park



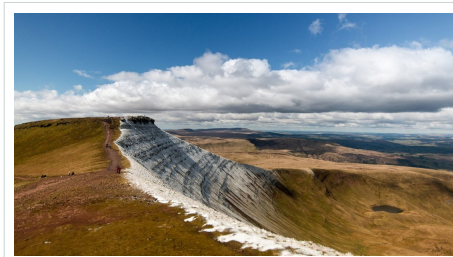
| Top recommendation           | Choice                                                                             |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Best natural destination     | Pen y Fan for the classic mountain day; Llyn y Fan Fach for wilder solitude.       |
| Best castle for scenery      | Carreg Cennen Castle.                                                              |
| Best giant structure         | Elan Valley dams, especially Caban Coch and Claerwen if time allows.               |
| Best coastal destination     | Rhossili Bay and Worm's Head viewpoint.                                            |
| Best low-walking destination | Brecon Canal Basin or Caerphilly Castle.                                           |
| Best full-day trip           | Elan Valley if you want engineering scale; Gower if weather and tides are perfect. |

# Destination Summary Table

Use the parking destination for navigation where that gives the easiest recognised access point. Always recheck live conditions before departure.

| Destination                               | Category                                                   | Distance       | Drive           | Direction  | Visit                                   | Walk                                     | Best feature                                      | Parking                                                     | P-to-view                                                      | Nav                 |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|------------|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Pen y Fan / Pont ar Daf                | Mountain, National park, Scenic viewpoint                  | 38 mi / 61 km  | 1 hr 05-20      | North      | 3-4 hr summit; 30-45 min viewpoint      | Moderate-strenuous                       | Highest summit in South Wales                     | Pont ar Daf car park, CF48 2HY                              | 0.2 mi to river/foothill views; 4 mi / 6.4 km return to summit | <a href="#">Map</a> |
| 2. Craig Cerrig-gleisiad                  | Valley, Scenic viewpoint, National park                    | 43 mi / 69 km  | 1 hr 10-25      | North-west | 45-90 min                               | Easy-moderate                            | Glacial cliffs from a quick roadside stop         | A470 lay-by / reserve access north of Storey Arms           | Views from car; 0.5-1.5 mi short reserve walk                  | <a href="#">Map</a> |
| 3. Brecon Canal Basin + Dragonfly Cruises | Canal, Scenic viewpoint                                    | 43 mi / 69 km  | 1 hr 05-20      | North      | 45 min basin; 2-2.5 hr cruise if booked | Easy                                     | Low-walking canal scenery and boats               | Theatr Brycheiniog / Canal Basin, LD3 7EW                   | 0-5 min to basin                                               | <a href="#">Map</a> |
| 4. Carreg Cennen Castle                   | Castle, Scenic viewpoint                                   | 65 mi / 105 km | 1 hr 35-55      | North-west | 1.5-2 hr                                | Moderate uphill                          | Ruined castle on a limestone crag                 | Carreg Cennen Castle visitor car park, SA19 6UA             | 10-20 min uphill to castle                                     | <a href="#">Map</a> |
| 5. Llyn y Fan Fach                        | Reservoir, Mountain, Valley, Scenic viewpoint              | 61 mi / 98 km  | 1 hr 40-2 hr    | North-west | 2-3 hr lake walk                        | Moderate; strenuous ridge optional       | Remote lake beneath dramatic escarpments          | Llyn y Fan Fach / Llandeusan access car park                | 1.5-2 mi each way to lake; ridge circuit is much longer        | <a href="#">Map</a> |
| 6. Rhossili Bay + Worm's Head viewpoint   | Beach, Coastal landscape, Scenic viewpoint                 | 67 mi / 108 km | 1 hr 45-2 hr 15 | West       | 2-4 hr                                  | Easy viewpoint; strenuous/tidal crossing | Sweeping beach, cliffs and sunset light           | National Trust Rhosili car park, SA3 1PR                    | 5-15 min to clifftop views; beach path is steep                | <a href="#">Map</a> |
| 7. Broughton Bay + Blue Pool              | Beach, Coastal landscape, Scenic viewpoint                 | 65 mi / 105 km | 1 hr 40-2 hr 10 | West       | 1.5-3 hr                                | Moderate; tidal/rocky                    | Wild north-Gower beach and tidal rock pool        | Broughton Bay / Broughton Farm access parking, SA3 1JP area | 5-10 min beach; 20-35 min to Blue Pool at suitable tides       | <a href="#">Map</a> |
| 8. Elan Valley dams                       | Reservoir, Valley, Engineering structure, Scenic viewpoint | 78 mi / 126 km | 1 hr 55-2 hr 25 | North      | 5-7 hr                                  | Easy viewpoints to moderate walks        | Huge Victorian dams and car-accessible viewpoints | Elan Valley Visitor Centre, LD6 5HP                         | 0-10 min for main dams; longer trails optional                 | <a href="#">Map</a> |
| 9. Caerphilly Castle                      | Castle, Engineering structure, Scenic viewpoint            | 9 mi / 14 km   | 25-35 min       | North      | 1.5-2 hr                                | Easy                                     | Massive moated fortress close to Cardiff          | Caerphilly town-centre short-stay parking near the castle   | 2-5 min                                                        | <a href="#">Map</a> |

# Destination Directory: Central Bannau Brycheiniog



### 1. Pen y Fan / Pont ar Daf

Mountain

National park

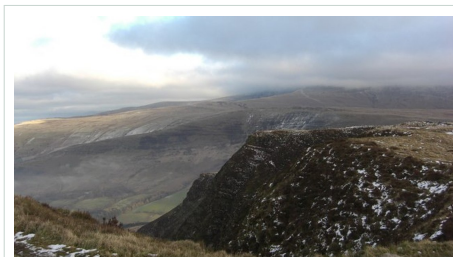
Scenic viewpoint

**Why:** Highest summit in South Wales

**Parking:** Pont ar Daf car park, CF48 2HY. Paid National Trust parking; toilets; often full on sunny weekends. Arrive early.

**Walk:** 0.2 mi to river/foothill views; 4 mi / 6.4 km return to summit. **Drive:** 1 hr 05-20.

[Official info](#) | [Open navigation](#)



### 2. Craig Cerrig-gleisiad

Valley

Scenic viewpoint

National park

**Why:** Glacial cliffs from a quick roadside stop

**Parking:** A470 lay-by / reserve access north of Storey Arms. Free small lay-by; no toilets; use only marked roadside parking and expect limited space.

**Walk:** Views from car; 0.5-1.5 mi short reserve walk. **Drive:** 1 hr 10-25.

[Official info](#) | [Open navigation](#)



### 3. Brecon Canal Basin + Dragonfly Cruises

Canal

Scenic viewpoint

**Why:** Low-walking canal scenery and boats

**Parking:** Theatr Brycheiniog / Canal Basin, LD3 7EW. Paid town/canal parking; toilets and cafes nearby. Cruise sailings are seasonal and timed.

**Walk:** 0-5 min to basin. **Drive:** 1 hr 05-20.

[Official info](#) | [Open navigation](#)

Image credits: Pen y Fan and the Central Beacons: Wikimedia Commons, reusable image; Craig Cerrig-gleisiad: Wikimedia Commons, reusable image; Brecon Canal Basin: Wikimedia Commons, reusable image

# Destination Directory: Western Bannau and Castles



### 4. Carreg Cennen Castle

|        |                  |
|--------|------------------|
| Castle | Scenic viewpoint |
|--------|------------------|

**Why:** Ruined castle on a limestone crag

**Parking:** Carreg Cennen Castle visitor car park, SA19 6UA. Visitor parking by castle/farm; admission and opening are seasonal. Verify charges before travel.

**Walk:** 10-20 min uphill to castle. **Drive:** 1 hr 35-55.

[Official info](#) | [Open navigation](#)



### 5. Llyn y Fan Fach

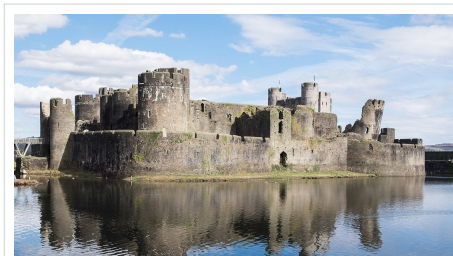
|           |                  |
|-----------|------------------|
| Reservoir | Mountain         |
| Valley    | Scenic viewpoint |

**Why:** Remote lake beneath dramatic escarpments

**Parking:** Llyn y Fan Fach / Llanddeusant access car park. Small free/low-facility parking; narrow single-track approach; no reliable toilets or phone signal.

**Walk:** 1.5-2 mi each way to lake; ridge circuit is much longer. **Drive:** 1 hr 40-2 hr.

[Official info](#) | [Open navigation](#)



### 9. Caerphilly Castle

|                  |                       |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| Castle           | Engineering structure |
| Scenic viewpoint |                       |

**Why:** Massive moated fortress close to Cardiff

**Parking:** Caerphilly town-centre short-stay parking near the castle. Paid council/town parking; Cadw notes short-stay parking about 110 m away.

**Walk:** 2-5 min. **Drive:** 25-35 min.

[Official info](#) | [Open navigation](#)

Image credits: Carreg Cennen Castle: Wikimedia Commons, reusable image; Caerphilly Castle: Wikimedia Commons, reusable image; Llyn y Fan Fach: Philip Halling / Geograph, CC BY-SA



# Destination Directory: Gower and Elan Valley



## 6. Rhossili Bay + Worm's Head viewpoint

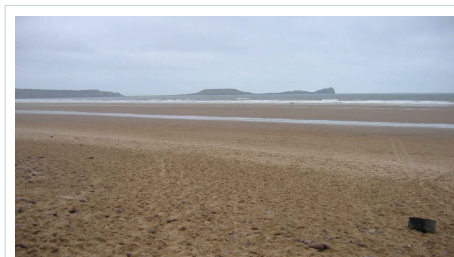
|                  |                   |
|------------------|-------------------|
| Beach            | Coastal landscape |
| Scenic viewpoint |                   |

**Why:** Sweeping beach, cliffs and sunset light

**Parking:** National Trust Rhosili car park, SA3 1PR. Paid National Trust parking; toilets/cafes nearby; congested on sunny days.

**Walk:** 5-15 min to clifftop views; beach path is steep. **Drive:** 1 hr 45-2 hr 15.

[Official info](#) | [Open navigation](#)



## 7. Broughton Bay + Blue Pool

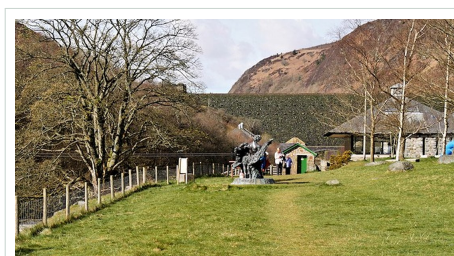
|                  |                   |
|------------------|-------------------|
| Beach            | Coastal landscape |
| Scenic viewpoint |                   |

**Why:** Wild north-Gower beach and tidal rock pool

**Parking:** Broughton Bay / Broughton Farm access parking, SA3 1JP area. Private/seasonal or local parking; charges and access can change. Roads are narrow.

**Walk:** 5-10 min beach; 20-35 min to Blue Pool at suitable tides. **Drive:** 1 hr 40-2 hr 10.

[Official info](#) | [Open navigation](#)



## 8. Elan Valley dams

|                       |                  |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| Reservoir             | Valley           |
| Engineering structure | Scenic viewpoint |

**Why:** Huge Victorian dams and car-accessible viewpoints

**Parking:** Elan Valley Visitor Centre, LD6 5HP. Paid visitor-centre parking; cafe/toilets. Some dam viewpoints are small roadside stops.

**Walk:** 0-10 min for main dams; longer trails optional. **Drive:** 1 hr 55-2 hr 25.

[Official info](#) | [Open navigation](#)

Image credits: Rhossili Bay and Worm's Head: Andrew Woodvine / Geograph, CC BY-SA; Elan Valley dams: Jonathan Billinger / Geograph, CC BY-SA

## Day 1 - Central Bannau Bry cheiniog

Pen y Fan, Craig Cerrig-gleisiad, Brecon Canal Basin and optional Dragonfly Cruises.

|                    |                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Depart</b>      | 07:15 from CF10 3EA. Drive to Pont ar Daf: approx. 1 hr 05-20.                                                                                                                                |
| <b>08:30-12:15</b> | Pen y Fan via Pont ar Daf. Allow 3-4 hr for the summit, including weather pauses and photos.                                                                                                  |
| <b>12:15-13:00</b> | Drive to Craig Cerrig-gleisiad via the A470; picnic or quick cafe stop if needed.                                                                                                             |
| <b>13:00-14:00</b> | Craig Cerrig-gleisiad roadside viewpoint/short reserve walk.                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>14:00-14:25</b> | Drive to Brecon Canal Basin.                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>14:30-17:30</b> | Basin walk, cafes and optional Dragonfly Cruise only if the current timetable and booking slot genuinely fit. A 2-2.5 hr cruise after a full summit day is possible only with an early start. |
| <b>Return</b>      | Leave Brecon 17:30-18:00; back to CF10 3EA approx. 18:45-19:30.                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Totals</b>      | Approx. 100-110 miles; 3-3.5 hr driving plus walks/stops.                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Key note</b>    | Mountain weather changes quickly. If cloud, wind or rain is poor, switch Pen y Fan to a lower viewpoint and spend more time in Brecon.                                                        |

## Day 2 - Western Bannau Bry cheiniog

Llyn y Fan Fach and Carreg Cennen Castle, paired carefully to avoid an overlong walking day.

|                    |                                                                                                                           |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Depart</b>      | 08:00 from CF10 3EA. Drive to Llyn y Fan Fach: approx. 1 hr 40-2 hr, slower on single-track approach roads.               |
| <b>10:00-13:00</b> | Short lake walk only. Walk to the lake, enjoy the escarpment view and return the same way.                                |
| <b>Lunch</b>       | Llandovery, Llandeilo or a packed lunch. Do not rely on facilities at the lake car park.                                  |
| <b>14:15-16:15</b> | Carreg Cennen Castle. Allow time for the uphill approach and viewpoints.                                                  |
| <b>Return</b>      | Leave by 16:30-17:00; back to CF10 3EA approx. 18:15-19:00.                                                               |
| <b>Totals</b>      | Approx. 135-150 miles; 4-4.75 hr driving plus walking.                                                                    |
| <b>Key note</b>    | Do not add the full Llyn y Fan Fach ridge circuit on the same day as the castle. Roads are narrow and parking is limited. |



## Day 3 - Gower Peninsula

Broughton Bay, Blue Pool, Rhossili Bay and Worm's Head viewpoint.

|                         |                                                                                                                                                                |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Depart</b>           | 08:00-09:00 from CF10 3EA, adjusted to the tide window. Drive to north Gower or Rhossili: approx. 1 hr 40-2 hr 15.                                             |
| <b>Tide-led order A</b> | If low tide is in the morning: Broughton Bay and Blue Pool first, then lunch, then Rhossili Bay and Worm's Head clifftop viewpoint for late light.             |
| <b>Tide-led order B</b> | If low tide is late afternoon: Rhossili viewpoint and beach first, lunch near Rhossili, then Broughton/Blue Pool only if you have a safe return window.        |
| <b>Worm's Head</b>      | Viewpoint is straightforward. Crossing the causeway is a separate tidal walk and should not be combined with Blue Pool unless tide windows clearly allow both. |
| <b>Return</b>           | Leave Gower around 17:30-19:00 depending on sunset and tide; back to CF10 3EA approx. 19:30-21:15.                                                             |
| <b>Totals</b>           | Approx. 145-160 miles; 4-5 hr driving plus beach/cliff walks.                                                                                                  |
| <b>Key note</b>         | Tides decide the day. Blue Pool and Worm's Head both have cut-off risk; check tide times, sea state and local advice before stepping below the cliffs.         |

## Day 4 - Elan Valley and Optional Caerphilly

A full-day engineering-and-landscape route, with Caerphilly best kept separate.

|                    |                                                                                                                                                                      |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Caerphilly</b>  | Treat Caerphilly Castle as a separate arrival/departure visit or an optional early morning stop if its current opening hours fit. Do not force it after Elan Valley. |
| <b>Depart</b>      | 07:45 from CF10 3EA direct to Elan Valley Visitor Centre: approx. 1 hr 55-2 hr 25.                                                                                   |
| <b>10:15-11:00</b> | Visitor Centre, toilets, cafe, maps and first Caban Coch views.                                                                                                      |
| <b>11:00-15:30</b> | Drive the dam sequence: Caban Coch, Garreg Ddu, Pen y Garreg and Craig Goch, using short signed viewpoints and photo stops.                                          |
| <b>Optional</b>    | Claerwen Dam adds scale and solitude but also time on remote roads. Add it only in good weather and daylight.                                                        |
| <b>Return</b>      | Leave Elan 16:30-17:30; back to CF10 3EA approx. 19:00-20:15.                                                                                                        |
| <b>Totals</b>      | Approx. 160-180 miles; 4.5-5.5 hr driving, more if Claerwen is included.                                                                                             |
| <b>Key note</b>    | Expect remote roads, patchy mobile signal and exposed weather. Fill fuel/charge plans before the valley.                                                             |

# Three-Day Alternatives

Both options keep Caerphilly Castle as a separate short Cardiff-side visit, because it is easy to reach and does not need a full road-trip day.

| Option                                 | Day 1                                                          | Day 2                                                         | Day 3                                                         | Best for                                                                          |
|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A - Natural scenery priority           | Central Bannau: Pen y Fan, Craig Cerrig-gleisiad, Brecon Basin | Carreg Cennen + short Llyn y Fan Fach lake walk               | Gower: Broughton/Blue Pool and Rhossili/Worm's Head viewpoint | First-time mountain/coast variety. Omits Elan Valley.                             |
| B - Engineering and landscape priority | Elan Valley dams full day                                      | Central Bannau + Brecon Canal; Pen y Fan only if weather fits | Gower tide-led coastal day                                    | Best if giant structures matter. Carreg Cennen or Llyn y Fan Fach may be omitted. |

**Recommendation:** choose Option B if the traveller wants both breathtaking landscapes and giant engineering structures. It keeps Elan Valley, the strongest engineering day, while still including the central mountains and Gower coast.

## Open In Maps

1. Pen y Fan | 2. Craig Cerrig-gleisiad | 3. Brecon Canal Basin | 4. Carreg Cennen Castle | 5. Llyn y Fan Fach | 6. Rhossili Bay | 7. Broughton Bay | 8. Elan Valley dams | 9. Caerphilly Castle

# Important Information

**Always recheck on the day:** live weather, mountain wind and visibility, tide times, parking capacity, road access, attraction opening hours, admission prices and whether booking is required. This guide was last checked on 30 July 2026.

|             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Weather     | Use the Met Office mountain forecast for Bannau Brycheiniog. Pen y Fan, Llyn y Fan Fach and Elan viewpoints can be cold, wet and windy even when Cardiff is calm.                                                               |
| Tides       | For Worm's Head, distinguish clifftop viewpoint, causeway approach and full crossing. For Blue Pool, check both tide time and sea state. Leave a generous safety margin.                                                        |
| Roads       | Llyn y Fan Fach, north Gower and parts of Elan Valley use narrow rural roads. Drive slowly, expect livestock, and avoid reversing long distances at dusk.                                                                       |
| Parking     | Pont ar Daf, Rhossili and small rural car parks fill early in good weather. Have backup stops and do not block gates or verges.                                                                                                 |
| Booking     | Check Cadw/Caerphilly, Carreg Cennen and Dragonfly Cruises before departure. Cruise timetables are seasonal and weather/operations dependent.                                                                                   |
| Final picks | Best natural destination: Pen y Fan. Castle for scenery: Carreg Cennen. Giant structure: Elan Valley dams. Coast: Rhossili. Low-walking: Brecon Basin. First visit: four-day plan if time allows; otherwise three-day Option B. |

## Useful official links

[National Trust Pont ar Daf](#) | [Pont ar Daf car park](#) | [Bannau Brycheiniog](#) | [NRW Craig Cerrig-gleisiad](#) | [Carreg Cennen Castle](#) | [Cadw Caerphilly Castle](#) | [National Trust Rhosili](#) | [Worm's Head tides](#) | [Elan Valley](#) | [Elan Valley Visitor Centre](#) | [Canal & River Trust Brecon Basin](#) | [Dragonfly Cruises](#) | [Met Office Mountain Weather](#) | [Tide Tables](#)



Main map



Elan Valley



Pen y Fan



Rhossili



Llyn y Fan Fach



Carreg Cennen



Caerphilly