

CASTLE HOUSE & GARDEN TOUR



7 nights

Email jenny@britholidays.com for dates and pricing

Interesting, Unhurried & Friendly

Country Lanes Tours is proud of our long history with The National Trust and this tour features some of their best gardens, castles and other properties, large and small, which are found in north and central Wales. The National Trust also owns over 100,000 acres of countryside, including mount Snowdon – the highest mountain in all of Wales.

For this tour we will travel in a comfortable ‘mini-coach’ with a maximum number of 12 occupants.

A great deal of our travels will take place within the Snowdonia National Park. Snowdonia is a precious place; it is unique, with its miles of ancient hedgerows and dry stone walls, traditional stone cottages, vernacular buildings, and diverse wildlife living in its 55,000 acres.

Our home base is in the mountain village of Betws y Coed, Welsh for “Chapel in the Woods”. The village was built almost entirely of stone and slate quarried from the mountains of Snowdonia and became a holiday destination with the arrival of the railway in 1868. Small hotels sprang up to accommodate

travelers in Victorian times and the village is still a favorite haunt all year round for those who love the outdoor life. Naturalists, ramblers, anglers, artists and photographers can be seen any day gathered at the village's heart, the famous Pont-y-Pair (Bridge of the Cauldron).

Our hotel for 7 nights means no packing and unpacking.



Itinerary

Day 1 – Friday:

5.00pm Welcome reception, meeting in the residence lounge.

6.00pm Your guide will take you on a short familiarization stroll around the village.

7.30pm Dinner.

Day 2 – Saturday:

Plas Newydd & Cemaes Heritage Coast

Departing **Betws** traveling through the **Ogden Valley**, crossing Thomas Teford's famous suspension bridge (b.182) to the **Isle of Anglesey** to visit Plas Newydd. This is a handsome 18th century house built by James Wyatt (1746 – 1813) on the banks of the Menai Straits. The house is well known for its

association with Rex Whistler, whose largest wall-painting is here. There is also a small military museum containing campaign relics of the 1st Marquess of Anglesey and the battle of Waterloo.

The property has a fine spring garden, mature woodland with access to a marine walk.

After lunch we travel to a stretch of coast at **Cemeas**, on the north of **Anglesey**, which is designated a Heritage Coast because of its' unspoiled beauty. The lagoon at Cemlyn, with its winter wildfowl, is perfect for bird watchers.

Day 3 – Sunday

Bodnant Garden & Male Voice Choir Concert

Morning at leisure in the village.

After lunch a visit to **Bodnant**, one of Britain's most spectacular gardens, Created in the early years of the 20th century by the 2ⁿ Lord Aberconwy. The site covers an area of 80 acres and holds the national Collections of Rhododendrons, Magnolias and Eucryphias.

Another of its' attractions is the world famous laburnum Arch, an overwhelming mass of golden blooms forming a tunnel 36 meters long.

After dinner an opportunity to attend a Male Voice Choir in concert at St. Mary's church in the village.

Day 4 – Monday:

Penrhyn Castle & Cwm Idwal

Departing **Betws**, we travel through the dramatic **Llanberis Pass** to visit **Penrhyn Castle**. This massive neo-Norman castle was built by Thomas Hopper (1776 – 1856) between 1820 – 1836 for the Pennant family, who made their fortune from the slate industry.

The castle is surrounded by parkland, formal gardens and semi-wooded walks, with many exotic species in the Victorian walled garden.

After lunch we journey up the Ffrancon valet to **Cwm Idwal**, which is one of the best places, and most southerly British places, to see plants which were very common during the cold glacial periods. Arctic-alpine plants such as moss campion and saxifrages can be seen in the cracks and crevices of the north facing slopes.

Day 5 – Tuesday:

Taking the Steam Train to the Summit of Snowdon

The National Trust launched an appeal in 2000 to raise £3.5 million to purchase Wales' highest mountain. The 'Save Snowdon' appeal captured the hearts of hundreds of thousands of people worldwide, including the appeal's president, actor Sir Anthony Hopkins, who dipped into his own pocket for the tune of £1 million.

Today, we follow the ‘tracks’ of holiday makers and steam train enthusiasts who, for more than 110 years, have appreciated the truly spectacular views as the train climbs through the atmospheric landscape of Snowdon, and be absorbed in the rich myth, legend and history Snowdonia has to offer.

Day 6 – Wednesday:

Ty Mawr Wymbrnat & Aberconwy House

Not all National Trust properties are so big; today we visit Ty Mawr in the secluded **Wybrnant Valley**, the birthplace of Bishop William Morgan, translator of the entire bible into Welsh. The house has been restored to its 16th -17th century appearance and houses a display of bibles in several languages. The house is surrounded by open fields and woodlands. Dating from the 14th century, Aberconwy house is the only



merchant house in the medieval Walled Town of Conwy to have survived its turbulent past.

Day 7 – Thursday:

Powis Castle and Garden & Chirk Castle

Powis Castle: Built in the 12th century by Welsh princes and perched dramatically on a rock above the magnificent gardens, this imposing castle has been adapted and embellished by successive generations of Herberts and Clives. The celebrated 17th century garden was laid out under the influence of the Italian and French styles

and is overhung by enormous clipped yews.

Chirk Castle: a magnificent Marcher fortress completed in 1310, the castle’s austere exterior contrasts with the elegant rooms within and the dramatic dungeon is a reminder of its’ turbulent past.

Information

The Gwydyr Hotel

The Gwydyr Hotel in Betws y Coed in the heart of Snowdonia is surrounded is surrounded by some of the most picturesque scenery in North Wales. The hotel, full of character and atmosphere, is owned and run by brothers David and Owen Wainwright. The Gwydyr Hotel is a picturesque building, situated in the center of the village amidst charming scenery and overlooking the delightful village green and is known for its friendly atmosphere, wonderful food, fine wine and excellent service. Tastefully appointed bedrooms are fully equipped with telephones, televisions, radio, beverage facilities, centrally heated and are all en-suite.

ROAD: Follow signs to the A 55 expressway travel west leave at Junction 19 and follow the A 470 signpost to Betws y Coed.

Private Car/Taxi: Transfer can be pre-arranged.