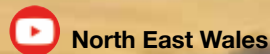
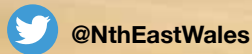
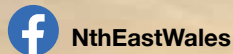
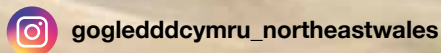


DISCOVER DENBIGHSHIRE by trails



Llwybrau.
Wales, by Trails.

#WalesByTrails



tourism@denbighshire.gov.uk

www.northeastwales.wales

Tourist Information Centres

Children's Village, West Parade,
Rhyl LL18 1HZ
01745 355068

Y Capel, Castle Street,
Llangollen LL20 8NU
01978 860828

Published in 2023 by Denbighshire County
Council's Tourism, Marketing and Events Team.

Photography: The Wales Collective/The Forge
Corwen, White Fox, Craig Colville, Croeso
Cymru/Visit Wales, @whittlings,
Eastwood Media, Ioan Said, Pexels.

Editorial and design: White Fox.

Print: Lexon Group.

*Cover shot Clwydian Range
This page Caer Drewyn, Corwen*

be a trail taker

In Wales, there have always been wonderful trails. Journeys across our great outdoors or weaved through history, language and culture.

Now's the time to celebrate these trails, from the well-trodden to the brand-new, and open up our country for everyone to enjoy, right throughout the year.

Denbighshire, here in North East Wales, is blessed with iconic routes including Offa's Dyke Path National Trail and the Wales Coast Path. But we don't just mean literal trails. We're talking about cultural crawls, food safaris, journeys through time and across our dark skies.

You should find plenty of inspiration in these pages. And remember – no one gets anywhere worthwhile by staying still. So be a trail taker.

All information was accurate at time of publication. But things can change. To avoid disappointment please check with all venues to confirm opening times and other details before you travel.



WORLD
LAND
TRUST™

www.carbonbalancedpaper.com
CBP010502



Denbighshire by Trails

magazine is printed on Carbon Balanced Paper. Through World Land Trust the publishers have balanced the equivalent of 710kg of carbon dioxide. This support will enable the trust to protect 136m² of critically threatened tropical forest.

trails on foot

Denbighshire is a prime walking destination. It's probably the best way to see our iconic countryside and coastline and give yourself the time to truly relax.

You don't necessarily have to go far. We have our fair share of promenade strolls and riverside meanders that won't turn into a major expedition. But we offer a couple of epic challenges too – trails that belong not just to Denbighshire but to the nation.

First of these bucket list routes is the mighty Wales Coast Path. At 870 miles long it was the first footpath to follow a country's entire coastline. Not that you have to walk it all, of course.

4

You could just stick to Denbighshire's bit – the seven miles of golden sands connecting the seaside resorts of Rhyl and Prestatyn along with the windswept Gronant Dunes, home of skylarks, rare natterjack toads and the only little tern colony in Wales.

Offa's Dyke Path National Trail, meanwhile, traces Britain's longest ancient monument on its 177-mile coast-to-coast journey from Chepstow to Prestatyn. Our dramatic final section passes through the World Heritage Site around Llangollen and the Dee Valley before scaling the purple peaks of the Clwydian Range.

If you've walked the whole trail, you can sign a special book in the Nova Centre on Prestatyn's seafront. But coffee and cake in their Beach Hut Café is a must, whatever distance you covered.

www.clwydianrangeanddeevalleyaonb.org.uk

www.walescoastpath.gov.uk





Nova Centre, Prestatyn

Day trails

It's not all long-distance epics in Denbighshire. All these walking trails can be done in a day.

Dee Valley Way

Fairly strenuous hiking trail between the towns of Corwen and Llangollen in the glorious Dee Valley, split into five sections.

North Berwyn Way

Thirteen-mile linear trail climbing the wild North Berwyn Mountains for experienced and well-equipped walkers.

Prestatyn-Dyserth Way

Mostly traffic-free three-mile trail follows the disused railway line to the Talargoch lead mines, now a wildlife corridor.

Community Miles

A series of short circular strolls around Denbighshire's villages, all designed to take about an hour and with handy calorie counters.

Accessible trails

Lots of our walks are suitable for those in wheelchairs or with pushchairs including the promenade at Rhyl and Prestatyn, the riverside trail at Loggerheads Country Park, the Prestatyn-Dyserth Way and Llangollen canal towpath.

Sacred trails

Connect special places such as St Asaph Cathedral with our splendid medieval parish churches and ancient holy wells to make a trail with a spiritual dimension.

6

world-class trails

Pontcysyllte Aqueduct

The pyramids of Egypt, Machu Picchu in Peru, India's Taj Mahal. All awarded World Heritage Site status because they are of "outstanding universal value". But it's an awfully long way to go for a short break.

Fortunately the good people of UNESCO decided that 11 miles of Llangollen Canal deserved to share the same pedestal. And no wonder. Thomas Telford's canal cuts through superbly rugged terrain with a series of great aqueducts, tunnels, bridges and embankments, including mighty Pontcysyllte Aqueduct itself.

More than two centuries ago artists such as JMW Turner came to paint the sublime landscape of the Dee

Valley and these monumental feats of engineering. They're still inspiring visitors today, partly thanks to a project we call Our Picturesque Landscape.

We're opening up views of landmarks such as the Horseshoe Falls, reinstating the camera obscura at Castell Dinas Brân and devising a set of Picturesque Circular Walks – including one that follows in the footsteps of the Ladies of Llangollen.

In fact you can walk, cycle and paddle the entire World Heritage Site. You can travel as Telford intended on a canal boat from Llangollen Wharf. Or you can ride one of Britain's most scenic heritage railways – all the way from Llangollen to the new station at Corwen planned for 2023.

www.pontcysyllte-aqueduct.co.uk
www.llangollen-railway.co.uk

7

Outstanding beauty

Most of the World Heritage Site is within the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) – the dramatic upland frontier of North Wales.

It covers 390 square kilometres of windswept hilltops crowned by Iron Age forts, heather moorland, limestone crags and wooded valleys.

This historic gateway to Wales isn't for gazing at from a distance. It demands to be explored. The superb country parks at Loggerheads and Moel Famau are brilliant places to start your journey.

www.clwydianrangeanddeevalleyaonb.org.uk



Shepherd's hut, Moel Famau



taste tours

You'll find top quality food and drink everywhere in Denbighshire – even halfway up a mountain. The solar-powered shepherd's hut in Bwlch Pen Barras car park is a welcome sight for walkers heading for the summit of Moel Famau.

Season and weather permitting, it dispenses locally made cakes and snacks along with hand-crafted coffee roasted by Owen and Edwards in Ruthin – visible far below in the lovely Vale of Clwyd.

They're part of Clwydian Range Food and Drink, a group of bakers, brewers, distillers, cheesemakers, bee keepers, kitchen gardens and B&Bs all striving to raise the profile of the local food scene. There's a similar group based in Llangollen and the Dee Valley.

So there are food heroes everywhere you look. Put together your own taste tour by visiting our farm shops and delis, our cosy country pubs and restaurants. Track down our award-winning butchers, our artisan ice-cream makers, our growers of dew-fresh fruit and veg.

Start with Rhug Estate near Corwen – an organic farm with takeaway, café, drive-thru and farm shop stocking lots of our local food stars. Or meet the ethical traders, street food sellers and

craft drink makers at Ruthin's indoor market hall.

Best of all, come to one of our food festivals: Rhuddlan in May, Corwen in June or Ruthin in April and August – with Llangollen Food Festival and Denbigh Plum Feast both celebrating autumn's bounty in October.

9

@TasteDeeValley

@ClwydianRangeFoodandDrink



The Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) isn't just spectacular by day. It also has awe-inspiring dark skies brimming with stars. So it's the perfect place for you to undertake the ultimate journey – across the vast distances of space.

trails by night

10

The AONB is on a mission to gain official status from the International Dark Sky Association. It's educating people about how to reduce light pollution – and holding a range of exciting events from stargazing and telescope talks to walks to see bats, owls and other nocturnal creatures.

Look out for Welsh Dark Sky Week in February as a major highlight in the celestial calendar. But you can explore the wonders of the universe for yourself if you know when and where to look. September to March is peak “Dark

Sky Season” with the best chance of seeing the Milky Way, winter constellations such as Orion or even a meteor shower.

There are four Dark Sky Discovery Sites that are open overnight, and are safe and accessible: Llangwyfan car park near Penycloddiau hillfort, Moel Arthur car park near Cilcain, Bwlch Pen Barras car park near Moel Famau and Llantysilio Green near the Horseshoe Falls, Llangollen. Just wait for a clear night – and allow yourself to be tempted into the dark by moonbeams and starlight.

www.clwydianrangeanddeevalleyaonb.org.uk
www.discoveryinthedark.wales



11

Stargazer's checklist

Warm clothes: hat, gloves
and lots of layers

Torch with a red filter

Fully charged mobile phone –
always tell someone where
you're going and what time
you'll be back

Binoculars

Sturdy shoes

Flask with a hot drink

Blanket or roll mat to lie on

Star map

Keep to the paths



cultural tours

12

*Ruthin Craft Centre
(Neil Wilkin and Rachael Woodman)*



You don't have to try too hard to put together a cultural trail around Denbighshire. Just move from one place to another. That should do it.

Our unique Welsh culture is embedded in our way of life. Just about every village and town holds its own festivals, country fairs or eisteddfodau. You'll hear Welsh spoken everywhere (and we'd love it if you give it a try).

If you crave these kinds of authentic experiences, just take a chance. Come any time, go anywhere. You can't really go wrong.

On the other hand you won't want to miss Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod in July, when Wales welcomes dancers and musicians from around the world. Or the 1,000-seat Pavilion Theatre right on the waterfront at Rhyl with its stylish 1891 restaurant and bar,

brilliant for a pre-show meal.

13

Equally essential is Ruthin Craft Centre, the leading applied arts centre in Wales. All set around a verdant courtyard are three exhibition spaces, makers' studios, retail gallery and a buzzing café.

Suitably inspired, try your hand at the Woodland Skills Centre in Bodfari or the tranquil setting of Wernog Wood in the hills above Ruthin, where an army of craftspeople deliver courses in ceramics, jewellery, botanical skincare, leatherwork and lino relief printmaking.

www.rhylpavilion.co.uk
www.ruthincraftcentre.org.uk
www.dorygallery.com

town and city trails

Denbighshire is renowned for its magnificent countryside and pristine beaches. But don't get so carried away with our great outdoors that you forget our thriving market towns and famous seaside resorts.

They're full of independent shops and great places to eat and drink. There's no better way to explore them than by following our town trails. There are seven in all – one for every day, plus a city trail around one of Britain's smallest and most historic cities.

14



Denbigh



Pont y Ddraig, Rhyl

The walks are easy but they pack a lot in, so give yourself at least half a day for each. Here are some of the highlights:

Rhyl

The quintessential British seaside resort with bang-up-to-date attractions such as the SC2 waterpark, an historic harbour and a wonderful golden beach.

Prestatyn

A 'Walkers Are Welcome' town that sits on both the Wales Coast Path and Offa's Dyke Path National Trail – don't miss the Nova Centre on the promenade.



Llangollen

Rhuddlan

This circular trail covers more than 1,000 years of turbulent history including a Norman mound, medieval church and one of the great castles of Wales.

St Asaph

Britain's smallest ancient cathedral commands the High Street of a city with a population of just 4,000. But St Asaph has loomed large in Welsh culture since the sixth century.

Denbigh

Explore the great castle of Edward I, the ruined Elizabethan church of Robert Dudley and the mansions of Vale Street – more listed buildings than in any other town in Wales.

Ruthin

Bustling Ruthin is truly special. Iconic buildings break the skyline as you walk: the battlements of Ruthin Castle, the tower of Ruthin Gaol and the spire of St Peter's Church.

Corwen

This is the ancestral home of Wales's greatest hero, Owain Glyndŵr, and your final destination on Llangollen Railway's 10-mile journey through the Dee Valley.

Llangollen

One of Wales's most popular inland resorts and outdoor adventure centres – with a canal and riverside setting that's so spectacular it's part of a World Heritage Site.

Pick up a set of our trail leaflets or download them at:
www.northeastwales.wales

the north wales way

The North Wales Way is definitely a trail. It follows an ancient trading route for 75 miles all along the North Wales coast to the island of Anglesey. But it's also an idea.

And the idea is simple: get off the beaten track. Explore, zig-zag, make connections. Otherwise you could be missing the highlight of your entire visit.

Denbighshire is fantastically well connected, with the coast-hugging Chester to Holyhead railway line and the main artery of the A55 passing through. But we can be easy to miss if your mind is tuned to the tourist honeypots farther west.

So slow down. Hop off at Rhyl or Prestatyn railway stations to explore these wonderful seaside resorts and historic villages such as Dyserth and Meliden. When you see the brown signs on the A55 for the Vale of Clwyd, take a detour. It will be worth it.

The Vale offers epic views of the surrounding hills as it sweeps down from Rhuddlan near the coast, through the ancient city of St Asaph to take in Denbigh and Ruthin before reaching the source of the River Clwyd.

Its lush meadows and bustling market towns offer a different pace of life – and a taste of the authentic Wales. Not to mention three magnificent heritage attractions, all specially signposted and ready to make a trail in their own right.



Vale of Clwyd trail

Rhuddlan Castle

Part of an “iron ring” of castles constructed by Edward I in the 13th century, this is one of the great fortresses of Wales. The view of castle, church and bridge all clustered together beside the banks of the River Clwyd is so iconic it was painted by JMW Turner.

www.cadw.gov.wales

St Asaph Cathedral

Just 182 feet long and 68 feet wide – but an immense presence in Welsh culture. This is the home of the very first Welsh language Bible, published in 1588, with an original copy on display inside and a splendid translators’ memorial on the cathedral green.

www.stasaphcathedral.wales

Denbigh Castle and Town Walls

Edward I’s castle with its immense triple-towered gatehouse commands spectacular views over the whole Vale of Clwyd. Borrow a key for your own private tour of the medieval town walls, some of the most complete in Britain.

www.cadw.gov.wales

active trails

Our splendid coastline, dramatic hills and tumbling rivers are made to enjoy. But you don't necessarily have to venture outside to experience an adrenalin-fuelled adventure.

Dare you, for instance, ride the fearsome Anaconda? It's the fastest flume at the incredible SC2 waterpark on Rhyl's seafront, which also contains a Ninja TAG assault course to test your skill, fitness and bravery. Here are a few other ideas:

Watersports

You'll find Pro Kitesurfing's training centre and café beside Rhyl's magnificent beach. Llangollen is a hotspot for river rafting, kayaking and standup paddleboarding while Llyn Brenig is the perfect place to learn to sail.

Mountain biking and cycling

Our mountain biking is all about panoramic views and swooping descents. At 350-acre Coed Llandegla a network of custom-built routes covers every grade from green to black. National Cycle Route 5 runs right along the promenade between Rhyl and Prestatyn.

Nature and wildlife trails

Hear the dawn chorus, join a bat walk, hunt for mini-beasts. Walk with miniature donkeys at Moel Famau, take a husky ride with Mynydd Sleddog Adverntures – or walk your own canine companion on our winter beaches.

Foraging and bushcraft

Glamping retreat The Forge at Corwen offers everything from yoga and wellbeing breaks to trail running, wild swimming and even scything. Original Outdoors near Ruthin provides bushcraft, navigation and survival training – plus a one-day foraging and wild food course.



SC2, Rhyl

Be Adventure Smart

Before you venture into our great outdoors, ask yourself three vital questions:

Do I have the right gear?

Do I know what the weather will be like?

Am I confident I have the knowledge and the skills for the day?

The Adventure Smart website will tell you more. Wherever you go, always follow the Countryside Code with its mantra of Respect – Protect – Enjoy.

www.adventuresmart.uk

19



www.sc2rhyl.co.uk

www.ridenorthwales.co.uk

www.clwydianrangeanddeevalleyaonb.org.uk

The Forge, Corwen



As if being locked up, worked on a treadmill and fed gruel wasn't enough, prisoners at Ruthin Gaol in the 1870s risked an even worse punishment – transportation to Australia.

heritage trails

A new cell, recreated as the hull of a ship, tells the story of their long journey to the New World. The gaol's basement has been restored to reveal the magnificent original brickwork – and there's a chance to sample some Victorian prison exercise.

It's all part of a two-year renovation that's made Britain's only Pentonville-style prison open to the public even more atmospheric. You can make your very own trail into the past by connecting it to more of our historic treasures.

You won't have to go far to reach one of the oldest timber-framed townhouses in Wales. Nantclwyd y Dre with its sumptuously recreated rooms is also in Ruthin. Farther afield you could stroll down an imaginary Edwardian pier at Rhyl Museum or explore the remains of a Roman Bath House at Prestatyn.

You'll find medieval Valle Crucis Abbey just outside Llangollen and ornate Rug Chapel and tranquil Llangar Church near Corwen. And at Plas Newydd you can pay your respects to the fabled Ladies of Llangollen, as Wordsworth, Wellington and Anne Lister of "Gentleman Jack" fame have all done before you.

www.northeastwales.wales
www.cadw.gov.wales



Nantclwyd y Dre, Ruthin

21



Rug Chapel, Corwen



Plas Newydd, Llangollen



When you're following a trail, it's not just about getting from A to B. It's how you do it that counts. We strongly recommend travelling light.

car-free trails

22

We don't just mean not packing that extra pullover. We're talking about a light touch on the environment. Both when you're getting to Denbighshire and when you're moving around, there's likely to be an eco-friendly option.

So think about leaving your car behind. You'll probably enjoy your day even more. It's a chance to relax and enjoy the views without the added stress of traffic and parking.

Mix things up a bit – take a narrowboat towards the Horseshoe Falls near Llangollen and walk back along the canal towpath, for instance, or hop on a bus to return to base after a cross-country ramble.

Here's how to make your Denbighshire trail truly sustainable:

By bus

Get around easily without worrying about what bus to get on. The 1bus ticket gives you access to 27 bus operators and nearly 200 bus routes across North Wales.

Try the innovative Fflecsi bus service running around the towns and surrounding villages of Ruthin and Denbigh. These battery-powered buses are completely demand-led: just download the app or call 0300 234 0300 to book a journey.

The Dee Valley Picturesque Bus links Llangollen and surrounding villages to iconic attractions including Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, Horseshoe Falls, Valle Crucis Abbey, Plas Newydd and the Horseshoe Pass. It runs on Saturdays during the 2023 tourist season.

www.denbighshire.gov.uk
www.traveline.cymru

By train

Denbighshire is served by a great rail network, with links from London, Holyhead, Chester and Manchester. The nearest stations are Rhyl and Prestatyn on the main North Wales coast line and Chirk on the Chester to Shrewsbury line. Check out the Transport for Wales website for details of Rover or Ranger tickets allowing unlimited travel on the Welsh rail network.

www.tfw.wales
www.nationalrail.co.uk

By canal boat

From Llangollen Wharf, you can take a magical horse-drawn boat towards the Horseshoe Falls. But you'll need a motor and a head for heights if you fancy sailing over the "stream in the sky" at Pontcysyllte Aqueduct.

www.horsedrawnboats.co.uk



By cycle and e-bike

The Ride North Wales website is your complete guide to cycling and mountain biking in the region with downloadable maps and route cards and lists of bike shops, big events and places to stay.

But not everyone is looking to expend that kind of energy. Electric cycles are a great way to enjoy the countryside without the strain – boosting your power for hills or headwinds. Hire one from Llan E-Bikes of Henllan, Corwen-based Electric Dragon Cycles or community enterprise Drosi Bikes of Llangollen. There are also e-bikes for hire at Oneplanet Adventure at Llandegla, the Bike Hub at Rhyl Harbour and Llyn Brenig visitor centre.

www.ridenorthwales.co.uk

By electric vehicle

Already own a zero-emission vehicle? There are fast-charging points in eight public car parks across Denbighshire including Denbigh, St Asaph, Llangollen, Ruthin, Prestatyn and Rhyl. Rhug Estate Farm Shop near Corwen has unveiled a fast-charging station for electric vehicles available 24 hours a day, all accessed through a smartphone app.



