

Wales

1- Short introduction to geography

Wales has an area of 20,000km², with a lot of low altitude mountains (300-500m), overlooked by Snowdon (1085m), several hilly areas (Pembrokeshire Coast in the south-west and on Anglesey, an island in the extreme north-west) and almost no flat places. That's the reason why the number of climbs selected in the principality is relatively high compared with the other nations of United Kingdom. The Cambrian Mountains were a priority. They cross the north and the centre of Wales, while the Brecon Beacons cross the southern part. Other mountain ranges, less important, are also visited: the Clwydian Hills in the north-east, the Black Mountains in the south-east and Mynydd Preseli in the south-west.



Triple word score

2- Tourism



Wales has three National Parks. The highest point gives its name to Snowdonia. There we've selected 8 climbs (Llanberis, Rhyd-Ddu, Llyn Du, Bwlch Pen-y-Feidiog, Hirnant Pass, Bwlch-y-Groes, Aberllefenni and Aberdovey Panorama).



Hirnant Pass



Speed Hill Climb at Llys-y-fran
Reservoir (bottom of Mynydd Preseli)

In the south-west, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park has 3 climbs: Newgale Hill, Newton Mountain in the Cleddau Valley and Mynydd Preseli.

There are 5 in the Brecon Beacons, in the south-east: Bwlch Cerrig Duon, Devil's Elbow, Brecon Beacons itself, Cefn Onneu and Black Mountain.



Devil's Elbow



Cleydau Valley

The United Kingdom emphasizes its natural heritage thanks to the label « AONB » (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty »). 4 areas and 9 climbs are concerned:

- Seaside, on Anglesey: South Stack
- Llŷn Peninsula, in the north-west: Nant Gwrtheyrn and Rhiw Hill
- Clwydian Hills & Dee Valley in the north-east: Moel Famau (highest point), World's End, Horseshoe Pass, Gwaenysgor Hill and Moel-y-Parc
- Gower, in the south: Cefn Bryn



Lighthouse in front of South Stack



Moel Famau

Other places of interest are worth seeing:

- castles listed in the UNESCO World Heritage: Conwy (bottom of Sychnant Pass) and Harlech
- Powis Castle ; the Roman road at the Pass of the Two Stones
- medieval Tintern Abbey, painted by Turner
- scenic roads: Nant-y-Moch and Dylife Panorama
- Pistyll Rhaeadr Waterfall,...



Conwy Castle



Tintern Abbey

3- Sport



Marchlyn Mawr Reservoir, number 2 in points and best elevation gain

3 climbs exceed 500 europoints: Moel Famau (613), Marchlyn Mawr (531) and Bwlch y Groes (521). Then another BIG, Devil's Staircase (467), the monster Church Hill (431) and the well named Road to Hell (398).



Bwlch-y-Groes
Milk Race 1988



Down from Great Olme

Elevation gain. The maximum is at Marchlyn Mawr Reservoir (537m). Some other nice climbs: Moel Famau (484m), Dylife Panorama (472), Gospel Pass (453), Cefn Onneu (447), Bwlch (443), Bwlch y Groes (393), The Tumble (392),...

Constitution Hill and Church Hill are the best Welsh bombs (37pts). Mutton Dingle and Moel-y-Parc are very close (36). Then Moel Famau (35), Nant-y-Cerrig (34), Great Orme and Plas Uchaf (33),...

4- Media climbs

In the north, BIGs are appreciated (Llanberis, Horseshoe and Bwlch-y-Groes). The Road to Hell sees the Conwy Gran Fondo and Stwlan Dam was used for a Himalayan experience: <https://www.sirguylitespeed.com/everesting-5-stwlan-dam-snowdonia-wales/>



Hairpins in Stwlan



The place to be is for sure Harlech Hill Climb and its 40%.



In the centre, Brecon Beacons often sees the Tour of Britain and gets its own sportive. Other sportives (Dragon Ride Devil, Iron Mountain Sportive, Autumn Epic) cross Cefn Onneu, Devil's Elbow, Gospel Pass, Devils Staircase, Glascwm or Elan Valley. Finally, the Aberystwyth Cycle Festival organises a Hill Climb on Cefn Llan and crosses Nant-y-Moch and The Arch in a circuit.



Glascwm: cross with the road?



Dandy horse on Cefn Llan

In the south, 3 climbs seem to be part of the furniture:

-The Bwlch, National Hill Climb in 2001, always KOM in the Junior Tour of Wales and unavoidable in the sportives.

-Caerphilly, often KOM 1re category in the Tour of Britain.

-The Tumble, major spot in all the events (races and bike rides) in the south-east.



Martin attacks, Quintana responds
Tour of Britain 2013



A real road sign, like the big climbs

Rhigos and Black Mountain are also regularly visited. And we'll end the zakuski with the short, but lethal bomb Constitution Hill, defused by Albasini in 2010.

