



# Pilgrim's Way to Bardsey Island

THE COMPLETE GUIDE



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# Overview

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## Pilgrim's Way to Bardsey Island: North Wales Pilgrimage Route

The Pilgrim's Way to Bardsey Island is the waymarked North Wales Pilgrim's Way, a 216 km point-to-point walk across **Wales** from Holywell to Aberdaron. Allow about 14 days. It is a moderate long-distance route for hikers with reasonable fitness: long daily stages, open moorland, Eryri/Snowdonia foothills and exposed Llŷn Peninsula coast, but no technical terrain. It suits walkers who want a historic pilgrimage line linking churches, holy wells and coastal paths rather than a wilderness trail.

### Route Overview

Walk east to west from Basingwerk Abbey and St Winefride's Well in Holywell, Flintshire, across North Wales to Aberdaron on the tip of the Llŷn Peninsula. Key places include Tremeirchion, St Asaph, Gwytherin, Conwy, Rowen, Penmaenmawr, Abergwyngregyn, Bangor, Clynnog Fawr, Nefyn, Pistyll and Porth Oer. The optional final leg is a pre-booked, weather- and tide-dependent boat from Porth Meudwy, about 1.8 km from Aberdaron, to Bardsey Island / Ynys Enlli. For related Welsh routes, compare the coastal **Anglesey Coastal Path**, the short **Aber Falls Walk** near Abergwyngregyn, or the hillier **Beacons Way**.

### Pilgrimage history of Bardsey and North Wales

Bardsey Island has been a Christian pilgrimage destination since St Cadfan founded a monastery there around 516 AD. It became one of Britain's major medieval pilgrimage centres, known as the "Island of 20,000 Saints". Tradition attributed to Pope Callixtus II held that three pilgrimages to Bardsey equalled one to Rome. The modern North Wales Pilgrim's Way revives the route linking four key sites: Holywell, Gwytherin, Clynnog Fawr and Bardsey.

### Notable highlights

- **St Winefride's Well, Holywell:** A famous medieval healing shrine at the start of the route, long known as "the Lourdes of Wales" and a continuous place of pilgrimage for centuries.
- **Basingwerk Abbey:** The official starting point, a ruined medieval Cistercian/Savigniac abbey near Holywell.
- **Clynnog Fawr, St Beuno's Church:** A large historic church on the Llŷn Peninsula and one of the four principal North Wales pilgrim sites.
- **Porth Oer / Whistling Sands:** A coastal stop on the Llŷn section, reached as the route follows exposed coast path terrain towards Aberdaron.
- **Aberdaron and Porth Meudwy:** Aberdaron is the western end of the walk; nearby Porth Meudwy is the small cove used for the passenger boat to Bardsey.
- **Bardsey Island / Ynys Enlli:** The sacred goal of the pilgrimage, known as the "Island of 20,000 Saints", now also a National Nature Reserve and International Dark Sky Sanctuary.

## Challenges to expect

Expect a steady 14-day walk rather than a short break: the main challenge is sustained distance. Terrain mixes field paths, woodland, riverside sections, moorland, mountain foothills and exposed clifftops. Surfaces can be muddy, rocky or slippery after rain. Coastal and higher sections are weather-exposed, and the Bardsey boat is not guaranteed because it depends on tide and conditions. Accommodation exists, but there is no standard camping infrastructure.

# Key Data

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Country	United Kingdom, Wales
Distance	216 km
Duration	14 days
Difficulty	Moderate
Trail type	Point to point
Elevation gain/loss	300 m
Highest point	167 m
Terrain & landscape	Coastal, Woodland, Riverside, Moorland, Mountain Foothills
Trail surface	Dirt, Grass, Lanes, Tracks, Rocky
Accommodation	Hostels, Bunkhouses, Inns, B&Bs, Guest Houses
Average daytime temp.	15°C
Chance of rainfall	Moderate
Estimated cost	\$\$
Optimal season	Spring, Summer, Autumn
Accessibility	Family Friendly, Dog Friendly On Leash
Facilities	Restrooms, Established Campsites, Potable Water Sources, Picnic Areas
Permits & fees	No permits or fees

# Introduction

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The North Wales Pilgrim's Way / Taith Pererin Gogledd Cymru is a two-week crossing of North Wales from Holywell / Treffynnon to Aberdaron, linking old churches, holy wells, river valleys, upland passes and the coast of Penrhyn Llŷn. It suits walkers who want a historic pilgrimage line with real landscape variety, rather than a wilderness trek or a peak-bagging route.

The route's spiritual thread runs through Holywell, Gwytherin, Clynnog Fawr and, for those who make the optional crossing, Ynys Enlli / Bardsey Island. Along the way it passes St Winefride's Well, the prehistoric Druids' Circle near Penmaenmawr, St Beuno's great church at Clynnog Fawr and the pilgrim church at Pistyll.

Underfoot, expect field paths, quiet lanes, woodland, riverside walking, open moorland, rocky upland ground and exposed Llŷn coast path. The high ground is in the Carneddau foothills near Bwlch y Ddeufaen below Tal y Fan; the route does not summit Tal y Fan, and ascent figures vary by GPX.

This is a moderate walk, but not a casual short break. The challenge is sustained daily distance, changeable Welsh weather, muddy or slippery ground after rain, and the need to plan accommodation carefully where beds are limited.

The Bardsey boat from Porth Meudwy is an optional final leg and must be pre-booked; it is always dependent on weather and tides, so it should never be treated as guaranteed. Reaching Aberdaron is the end of the main walking route, whether or not the crossing runs.

This guide covers stages, daily planning, accommodation, food, transport, terrain, navigation and the common mistakes that make this route harder than it needs to be.

## Stage-by-Stage Guide

The 14 stages below follow the practical two-week split commonly used for the route, rather than the 25 official numbered sections. Distances are approximate: daily mileage often needs adjusting to match booked accommodation, especially in the Conwy uplands and on Penrhyn Llŷn.

### Stage 1: Greenfield / Holywell to Glan-yr-afon — about 18 km

The route begins at Basingwerk Abbey and St Winefride's Well in the Greenfield / Maes-Glas valley below Holywell / Treffynnon. This opening day moves quickly from pilgrimage landmarks into field paths, woodland and green lanes, with a steady rural feel once Holywell is behind you.

The main places and landmarks are Basingwerk Abbey, St Winefride's Well, Pantasaph Friary and Maen Achwyfan near Whitford / Chwitfordd. Maen Achwyfan is one of the finest early-medieval wheel-cross stones in Britain and is worth the short pause before continuing through farmland towards the Glan-yr-afon area.

Underfoot, expect a mixture of tracks, field paths, stiles and lanes. The going is not technically difficult, but it can be muddy after rain and the number of field boundaries makes progress slower than the distance suggests.

Holywell is the place to buy food before leaving. Services thin out quickly on the road and field sections towards Glan-yr-afon, so carry lunch, snacks and enough water for the full day.

Accommodation near the stage end is sparse. Options in the wider area include places around Llanasa, Trelawnyd and nearby settlements, but beds should be booked before starting the route rather than left to chance.

For access, Holywell has bus links and nearby North Wales coast rail access is via Flint. Once beyond Holywell, road access is by minor roads and local pick-up points only; taxi arrangements should be made in advance if needed. This should be checked before travelling.

Navigation is generally straightforward from the start, with waymarking and official roundel discs, but an OS map or GPX is still useful through fields and lanes. The main warning for this first stage is not difficulty but logistics: leave Holywell fully supplied.

### Stage 2: Glan-yr-afon to Waen — about 18 km

This stage continues through rolling Flintshire and Denbighshire countryside, linking small villages and quiet lanes before reaching the Waen area. The walking is mainly farmland, woodland edges, stiles and minor roads, with gentle hills rather than sustained upland.

The route passes through or near Llanasa, Trelawnyd, Tremeirchion and the Rhualt area. Trelawnyd has Gop Hill cairn nearby, while Tremeirchion is associated with St Beuno and has a useful community pub.

Food and water options are limited. The Salusbury Arms at Tremeirchion can be useful, but opening times should be checked before relying on it. Carry supplies from the previous stop or from Holywell if stage logistics have not allowed a morning resupply.

Accommodation around Waen and Rhualt includes camping, shepherd's huts and caravan park options, but the area is spread out. Do not assume the end point has walk-up beds; book accommodation and confirm exactly how far it is from the path.

Public transport is much less convenient here than at the start. Road access is possible via the village and rural lane network, but onward bus or taxi arrangements should be checked before travelling.

Waymarking continues, but field exits and lane junctions can be easy to miss. A GPX track is helpful, especially if mist or rain reduces visibility across farmland.

### **Stage 3: Waen to Llanefydd — about 18 km**

This day crosses more Vale of Clwyd farmland before reaching St Asaph / Llanelwy, then heads into quieter country towards Llanefydd. It is a useful transition stage: town facilities in the middle, followed by a more rural finish.

St Asaph is the key landmark and service stop. Its cathedral is one of the smallest medieval cathedrals in Britain and is an important stop on the pilgrim route. Beyond the city, the path becomes more remote as it climbs through field and woodland sections towards Llanefydd.

St Asaph has shops, cafés, pubs and other town facilities, making it the last reliable resupply before the end of the day. Llanefydd has the Hawk and Buckle pub, but opening and food arrangements should be checked before travelling.

Accommodation at Llanefydd is very limited, with options including the Hawk and Buckle and nearby B&B or self-catering accommodation. This is one of the stops where booking ahead is essential.

St Asaph has bus links and road access is reasonable compared with the upland stages that follow. Llanefydd is a smaller rural village, so any public transport or taxi plan for the end of the day should be arranged in advance.

Navigation is waymarked but becomes more rural after St Asaph. Carry a map or GPX and do not leave the city short of food or water.

### **Stage 4: Llanefydd to Gwytherin — about 18 km**

The route now feels more remote, crossing upland farmland and moorland via Llansannan before reaching Gwytherin. This is a quieter, more exposed stage than the first three days, with field paths, moorland tracks and lanes.

Llansannan is the main intermediate village and has a shop and post office. Gwytherin is one of the principal pilgrim sites on the route, associated with St Winefride and home to St Winifred's Church.

The ground can be wet after rain, particularly on moorland and field sections. The walking is not technical, but the combination of distance, limited services and rougher underfoot conditions makes this a more serious day than the early farmland stages.

Food should be topped up at Llansannan. Gwytherin has limited services, including the Lion Inn and a village shop / post office at the Old Stag Pub, but hours can be restricted and should be checked before travelling.

Accommodation in Gwytherin is very limited, with cottage and nearby self-catering options. Book well ahead and confirm whether any accommodation lies outside the village, as an extra walk at the end of the day is unwelcome here.

Public transport is limited in this upland area. Road access is by minor roads, and taxi pick-ups should be arranged in advance if required.

Waymarking is present, but this is a stage where an OS map and GPX are strongly recommended. Carry enough food and water to be self-sufficient if village services are closed.

## **Stage 5: Gwytherin to Llangernyw — about 18 km**

This stage continues through the Conwy hinterland, using moorland, valley farmland and quiet lanes. It is another low-service day, with a remote feel between Gwytherin, Pandy Tudur and Llangernyw.

Pandy Tudur is a small settlement on the way, while Llangernyw is the main highlight. The village churchyard contains a remarkable ancient yew tree, often described as around 4,000 years old, and the village is associated with St Digain.

The terrain is varied but rarely technical: expect grassy paths, field crossings, rougher moorland stretches and lanes. Wet ground is possible after rain, and progress can feel slower than the distance suggests.

There are very limited food and water options between Gwytherin and Llangernyw. The Old Stag Pub in Llangernyw serves food, but opening times should be checked before travelling. Carry a full day's supplies.

Accommodation at Llangernyw includes pub, B&B and glamping options, but capacity is limited. Book ahead and check whether evening food is available on the day of arrival.

Road access is via local rural roads. Public transport is limited, so this is not an easy stage to improvise if accommodation falls through.

Navigation is waymarked, but the route crosses quiet, sparsely populated country. Carry a map or GPX, and allow time in Llangernyw if visiting the yew and churchyard.

## **Stage 6: Llangernyw to Ty'n-y-Groes / Rowen — about 17 km**

This stage leaves the Conwy uplands and works towards the Conwy Valley, passing through Eglwysbach and the Tal y Cafn area before approaching Ty'n-y-Groes and Rowen. The day mixes moorland edges, farmland, lanes and riverside or valley walking.

Eglwysbach is the main village en route and can provide a useful break if services are open. Tal y Cafn has a pub and hotel on the Conwy valley road. Rowen is a stone village in the foothills and an important staging point before the hardest upland crossing of the route.

Food should not be assumed between the main villages. Eglwysbach has a pub, while Rowen has Malwen Café and the Ty Gwyn Hotel, but opening days and kitchen times vary and should be checked before travelling.

Accommodation around Rowen and Ty'n-y-Groes includes a campsite, hotel, B&B and self-catering options. The Conwy Youth Hostel is reachable by taxi, and Conwy is about 15 minutes away by car, but

onward transfer needs planning.

Road access improves near the Conwy Valley, although the actual pilgrim route still uses rural lanes and paths. Public transport and taxi arrangements should be checked before travelling.

Navigation is generally manageable, but a GPX is useful on the more open approaches to Rowen. Seion Chapel in Rowen is open daily for pilgrimage passport stamping.

## **Stage 7: Ty'n-y-Groes / Rowen to Llanfairfechan — about 17 km**

This is the most demanding upland stage of the whole route. From Rowen the path climbs steeply past Llangelynnin Old Church, then crosses the Carneddau foothills by the ancient Bwlch y Ddeufaen pass below Tal y Fan.

The landmark sequence is exceptional: Llangelynnin Old Church, Maen-y-bardd burial chamber, the standing stones of Bwlch y Ddeufaen and the Druids' Circle / Penmaenmawr stone circles. This is also the highest ground on the route, at roughly 395 m, although the path does not summit Tal y Fan.

Terrain is high, open and exposed. Expect rough moorland, old trackways, stony ground and a long descent towards the coast around Penmaenmawr and Llanfairfechan.

There are no facilities on the high moorland. Carry all food and water from Rowen. Llanfairfechan has small-town facilities, including shops, pubs and cafés.

Accommodation in Llanfairfechan is limited, with options such as Platt's Farm Bunkhouse & B&B. Book ahead, especially in holiday periods.

Road escape options are limited once committed to the high crossing. Penmaenmawr has bus links in the wider North Wales coast transport network, but current services should be checked before travelling.

Navigation is the key issue on this stage. Waymarks exist, but mist, low cloud or poor visibility can make the moorland difficult; carry map and compass or a reliable GPX, and check the weather forecast before setting out. Do not attempt this stage in bad conditions without confident navigation skills.

## **Stage 8: Llanfairfechan to Llanllechid / Bangor area — about 17 km**

From Llanfairfechan the route continues west along the North Wales coastal fringe, then turns through Abergwyngregyn and the northern Carneddau slopes. The day combines coastal edges, village paths, river sections and moorland or forest margins before reaching Llanllechid near Bangor.

Abergwyngregyn is the main highlight and service point. The detour to Aber Falls / Rhaeadr Fawr is about 2.5 km each way and is a very worthwhile addition if time and energy allow; the waterfall is around 37 m high and lies in a National Nature Reserve.

Abergwyngregyn has cafés, making it a useful stop after the previous upland day. Llanllechid itself has limited services, while Bangor nearby has full city facilities.

Accommodation near the stage end is usually found in the Bangor area, with hostel, B&B, hotel and self-catering options. Check whether the booked accommodation is actually on the route or requires a transfer.

Abergwyngregyn has bus links, and Bangor is one of the major public transport points on the route, with North Wales coast rail access. The final approach into the Bangor area requires attention to waymarks.

Navigation is mostly straightforward but not urban-simple: river paths, village lanes and approaches to Bangor can all cause small errors. A GPX is useful through Llanllechid and onward logistics into Bangor.

### **Stage 9: Llanllechid to Rhiwlas — about 18 km**

This stage crosses the Bangor side of Eryri / Snowdonia, beginning with Bangor Mountain and then following an old Penrhyn Quarry railway trackbed through the slate landscape around Tregarth. It then continues south-west through woodland, quarry country and foothill terrain towards Rhiwlas above Llanberis.

The views from Bangor Mountain take in Bangor, the Menai Strait and Anglesey / Ynys Môn. The disused Penrhyn Quarry railway section gives easier walking and a strong sense of the area's slate heritage.

Bangor is the main place to resupply before setting off, with supermarkets, cafés and restaurants. Tregarth has limited services, and Rhiwlas itself is limited, so do not rely on finding food at the end of the stage.

Accommodation at Rhiwlas is limited. Many walkers use Llanberis, slightly south of the route, where there are hostels, hotels, pubs, cafés and self-catering options.

Bangor is a major rail and bus access point. Llanberis is a busy Eryri hub, but onward transfers between the route, Rhiwlas and Llanberis should be planned rather than assumed.

The old railway section is straightforward underfoot, but the moorland and woodland sections towards Rhiwlas need map or GPX attention. Weather can deteriorate quickly on the Eryri flanks, even when the route itself is below the higher summits.

### **Stage 10: Rhiwlas to Waunfawr — about 16 km**

This is a shorter stage through the lower Eryri foothills, moving south-west on field paths, tracks and quiet lanes. The route stays below the high mountain ground but remains open to changeable Welsh weather.

The landscape is defined by the Eryri backdrop and the Welsh-language heartland west of Llanberis. Waunfawr is the practical end point, a village on the A4085 with a halt on the Welsh Highland Railway.

Food and water are limited until Waunfawr, where there is a pub, café and shop. Carry enough for the day in case opening hours do not align with arrival.

Accommodation at Waunfawr includes campsite and bunkhouse options. Nearby holiday-let accommodation may also be used, but check distance from the route before booking.

Road access at Waunfawr is better than on the previous upland stages, and the Welsh Highland Railway can be useful for logistics towards Caernarfon or Porthmadog. Timetables and operating days should be checked before travelling.

Navigation is waymarked, but carry a map for the moorland and field sections. This is a sensible stage to keep efficient rather than overlong, as the following day moves towards the Llŷn coast.

## **Stage 11: Waunfawr to Clynnog Fawr — about 18 km**

The route leaves the Eryri foothills and descends west through the Nantlle Valley / Dyffryn Nantlle towards the coast at Clynnog Fawr. The walking mixes field paths, lanes, open farmland and former slate-quarry landscapes, with the Nantlle Ridge visible to the south.

Penygroes is the key intermediate service point. Clynnog Fawr is the major pilgrimage highlight: St Beuno's Church is one of the four key sites on the route, with Ffynnon Beuno, pilgrimage features and passport stamps.

Penygroes has shops and café options, so resupply there before the final approach. Clynnog Fawr is a very small village with minimal services beyond the church.

Accommodation near Clynnog Fawr is limited and includes camping options in the wider area. There are no pubs or hotels in the village, so food and overnight arrangements need to be fixed before arrival.

Road access is possible at Penygroes and Clynnog Fawr, but public transport details should be checked before travelling. This is a practical place to be precise about pick-up points if using luggage transfer.

Navigation is generally manageable on lanes and field paths, but the end-of-day logistics are the main warning. Do not arrive at Clynnog Fawr expecting a full village service centre.

## **Stage 12: Clynnog Fawr to Llithfaen — about 17 km**

This stage marks the start of the Llŷn Peninsula section. The route heads west from Clynnog Fawr through fields, farm tracks, lanes and coastal sections, passing Trefor before climbing into the dramatic landscape below Yr Eifl / the Rivals.

Trefor is a former quarry village with harbour access and is the main practical stop. Yr Eifl dominates the skyline, and Nant Gwrtheyrn, the National Welsh Language Centre, lies in a striking valley below the peaks and is worth considering if accommodation or timing allows.

The stage is more physically demanding than the distance suggests because of the climbing around Yr Eifl. The main pilgrim path stays below the summit ridge, but the terrain is still hillier and more exposed than the approach to Clynnog Fawr.

Trefor has a village shop and café. Llithfaen is tiny, so carry enough food and water from Trefor for the climb and for any gap before evening arrangements.

Accommodation at or near Llithfaen is very limited. Nant Gwrtheyrn and the Nefyn area may be practical alternatives, but this changes the day's logistics and should be booked well ahead.

Road access is possible at Trefor and Llithfaen, though public transport is more limited on Penrhyn Llŷn than in the northern half of the route. This should be checked before travelling.

Waymarking continues, but the Yr Eifl section benefits from a GPX and careful weather planning. Exposed headlands and hillside tracks can feel severe in wind and rain.

## **Stage 13: Llithfaen to Porth Ychain / Tudweiliog — about 19 km**

This is the longest day in the 14-stage schedule and one of the finest coastal stages. From Llithfaen the route descends towards the north Llŷn coast, passing Pistyll and Nefyn before continuing west along

exposed clifftop and coastal paths towards Tudweiliog and Porth Ychain.

Pistyll's 12th-century pilgrim church is one of the most atmospheric stops on the whole route, with its leper window and herb-filled churchyard. Nefyn provides the main service break, while the optional detour to Porth Dinllaen and the Tŷ Coch Inn is highly worthwhile but adds distance.

The coast path is beautiful but tiring. Expect undulating cliff walking, grassy headlands, narrow sections and some awkward grassy slopes, with waymarked stretches of the Wales Coast Path and occasional golf-course crossings near Nefyn.

Pistyll has no services. Nefyn has shops, pubs and cafés, and Tudweiliog has a village shop, but the stretch between Nefyn and the Tudweiliog area can feel long and exposed. Carry water for the full coastal section.

Accommodation around Porth Ychain and Tudweiliog includes a hotel, B&B and campsites, including pilgrim-pod-style options, but availability is limited. Book ahead, especially in summer and school holidays.

Nefyn and the Llŷn villages are served by local transport rather than the frequent rail-and-bus network of the coast. Current bus and taxi options should be checked before travelling.

Navigation is generally clear on the coast path, but pay attention where the route crosses golf-course land and where paths split near beaches and headlands. Wind can make this stage much harder than the mileage suggests.

## **Stage 14: Porth Ychain to Aberdaron — about 18 km**

The final mainland stage follows the western Llŷn coast towards Aberdaron, using coastal paths, farmland tracks and moorland edges. It is a spectacular finish, with Bardsey Island / Ynys Enlli coming into view on the last part of the route.

Porth Oer / Whistling Sands is the main mid-stage highlight, a National Trust beach known for sand that can 'whistle' underfoot. The route then continues by cliff path and around the Mynydd Mawr headland before descending to Aberdaron.

The walking is not technical, but it remains exposed to wind and weather. The coastal path can feel tiring at the end of a two-week route, so do not underestimate the final day.

Porth Oer has a seasonal café, but it should not be relied on without checking. Aberdaron has pubs, cafés and a shop, including the historic Gegin Fawr, a medieval pilgrimage rest-house associated with the final meal before crossing to Bardsey.

Aberdaron has a better range of accommodation than many Llŷn stops, including hotel, B&B, bunkhouse, camping and self-catering options. It is still a small village and summer demand is high, so book ahead.

Aberdaron is remote and relies on local Llŷn bus links rather than rail. Public transport, taxi and onward travel arrangements should be checked before travelling.

Navigation is usually straightforward on the waymarked coast path and field tracks. Many walkers add an extra night in Aberdaron, either to recover or to allow a flexible window for the optional Bardsey crossing.

## **Optional final leg: Porth Meudwy to Bardsey Island / Ynys Enlli**

The mainland route ends at Aberdaron. The traditional final goal, Bardsey Island / Ynys Enlli, is reached by an optional passenger boat from Porth Meudwy, about 1.8 km from Aberdaron by the coast path.

The crossing is pre-booked and entirely dependent on weather and tide. Bardsey Island Boat Trips operates crossings in season, broadly spring to autumn, but sailings can be cancelled at short notice if conditions in Bardsey Sound / Swnt Enlli are unsuitable.

The crossing usually takes around 20–30 minutes each way, depending on tide and sea state. A landing fee applies for adults, and current prices should be checked before booking.

Bardsey is a National Nature Reserve and International Dark Sky Sanctuary, with seabirds, grey seals, the Bardsey Observatory and the ruins of the 13th-century Augustinian abbey. Day visitors are welcome when boats run, and occasional longer stays are managed through the Bardsey Island Trust.

Build in a flexible day if reaching Ynys Enlli matters to the itinerary. The boat is never guaranteed, even after arriving at Porth Meudwy, and the walk should still be considered complete at Aberdaron if the sea prevents a crossing.

## Recommended Itinerary

The most practical end-to-end schedule is a **14-day walk from Basingwerk Abbey / Holywell to Aberdaron**, with an optional extra day for the Bardsey Island / Ynys Enlli boat. This pace keeps most walking days around 16–19 km, which suits the route's accommodation pattern better than trying to divide the official 25 waymarked sections evenly.

Book accommodation before committing to dates. Several overnight stops are small villages or rural locations with very limited beds, so daily stages are often shaped by what can be booked rather than by distance alone.

### Standard 14-day itinerary

Day	From	To	Approx. distance	Why this stage makes sense	Services/accommodation notes
1	Greenfield / Holywell, from Basingwerk Abbey	Glan-yr-afon	~18 km	A steady first day linking the route's spiritual start at Basingwerk Abbey and St Winefride's Well with the early Flintshire countryside.	Holywell / Treffynnon has the best pre-walk services, with shops, cafés, pubs and several accommodation options. Glan-yr-afon has limited accommodation, so this first night should be booked early.
2	Glan-yr-afon	Waen, near St Asaph / Llanelwy	~18 km	Continues across the early lowland sections towards the St Asaph area without overstretching the first two days.	Waen has limited rural options. St Asaph / Llanelwy has more services nearby, including shops and cafés, but check the exact location of booked accommodation against the route.
3	Waen	Llanefydd	~18 km	A practical stage beyond St Asaph into quieter Denbighshire country, keeping the daily distance consistent.	Llanefydd has limited accommodation. Do not assume same-day availability.
4	Llanefydd	Gwytherin	~18 km	Reaches one of the key pilgrimage villages associated with St Winefride while maintaining the 14-day rhythm.	Gwytherin is a small village with very limited accommodation and meal options. Booking ahead is essential.

Day	From	To	Approx. distance	Why this stage makes sense	Services/accommodation notes
5	Gwytherin	Llangernyw	~18 km	A useful linking day through rural North Wales before the route begins to draw closer to the Conwy valley and Eryri / Snowdonia foothills.	Llangernyw has limited accommodation and a village shop/Post Office. Check evening meal availability before arrival.
6	Llangernyw	Ty'n-y-Groes, near Rowen	~17 km	Positions you will for the following day's upland crossing behind Rowen and Penmaenmawr.	Accommodation is spread around Ty'n-y-Groes and Rowen, including limited B&B/self-catering and camping options. Rowen has some food options, but opening days and kitchen hours should be checked before travelling.
7	Ty'n-y-Groes / Rowen	Llanfairfechan	~17 km	One of the key mountain-foothill days, crossing the Carneddau uplands via the prehistoric landscape around the Druids' Circle and Bwlch y Ddeufaen.	This is one of the bigger ascent days, so start early in poor weather or short daylight. Llanfairfechan is a useful coastal stop with cafés, pubs and shops.
8	Llanfairfechan	Llanllechid, near Bangor	~17 km	A logical stage past Abergwyngregyn and towards Bangor, avoiding an overlong push into the city if accommodation is booked near Llanllechid.	Accommodation around Llanllechid is limited, but Bangor is nearby and has more options. Check whether booked lodging is on-route or requires a short transfer.
9	Llanllechid	Rhiwlas	~18 km	Carries the route inland from the Bangor side towards the Eryri foothills and sets up the approach to Waunfawr.	Rhiwlas has very limited accommodation. Nearby Llanberis has more walker-focused options, but using it may alter the stage and should be checked against mapping.
10	Rhiwlas	Waunfawr	~16 km	A shorter-distance day on paper, but with significant ascent and descent through the Eryri foothills.	Waunfawr is a small village with limited accommodation. It also has a Welsh Highland Railway station, useful for some itineraries.

Day	From	To	Approx. distance	Why this stage makes sense	Services/accommodation notes
11	Waunfawr	Clynnog Fawr	~18 km	Crosses towards the Llŷn side of the route and reaches St Beuno's Church, one of the major pilgrimage landmarks.	Clynnog Fawr is a very small village. Accommodation is limited, so this is another stage to secure early.
12	Clynnog Fawr	Llithfaen	~17 km	A transition onto the Llŷn Peninsula, keeping the day manageable before the more exposed coastal stages.	Llithfaen is a tiny village with very limited accommodation. Check food arrangements as well as beds.
13	Llithfaen	Porth Ychain, near Tudweiliog	~19 km	A longer but relatively lower-ascent day through the northern Llŷn coast section, near Nefyn and Tudweiliog.	The Tudweiliog area has more practical options than many rural stops, including hotel, B&B and campsite choices. Tudweiliog has a village shop.
14	Porth Ychain	Aberdaron	~18 km	The final walking stage follows the exposed Llŷn coast towards Porth Oer / Whistling Sands and the finish at Aberdaron.	Aberdaron has multiple accommodation options, a seafront pub, bakery, café and limited shops. Stay overnight if attempting the Bardsey boat, as sailings depend on weather and tide.
15+ optional	Aberdaron	Porth Meudwy, then Bardsey Island / Ynys Enlli by boat	~1.8 km walk to Porth Meudwy, then boat	This is the optional final pilgrimage leg to Bardsey Island / Ynys Enlli, treated as the route's 26th section.	The boat must be pre-booked and is never guaranteed. Sailings are weather- and tide-dependent, broadly April to October; dogs are not permitted on the island. Confirm current arrangements and prices before booking.

## Slower itinerary: 15-17 days

A slower schedule suits walkers who want shorter days, more time at pilgrimage sites, or a safer buffer for poor weather on the upland and coastal sections. The most sensible places to add time are around **Llanfairfechan, Bangor / Llanllechid, Llanberis / Rhiwlas or Waunfawr**, where there are better transport or accommodation possibilities than in the smallest villages.

The days most worth easing are **Day 7 over the Carneddau foothills** and **Day 10 through the Eryri foothills**, both of which carry more ascent than the distance suggests. A rest or short-transfer day near Bangor or Llanberis can also make the middle of the route easier to manage.

This slower version is best for first-time long-distance walkers, anyone carrying a full pack, and walkers using public transport rather than luggage transfer. Exact splits should be planned around booked beds and checked against official mapping before booking.

### **Faster itinerary: around 10 days**

A faster schedule is possible for strong walkers who are comfortable with repeated long days of **25 km or more** and who can handle ascent, mud and exposed weather without needing short stages. It usually means combining some of the shorter official waymarked sections, especially in the early Flintshire and Denbighshire part of the route.

This pace leaves less room for difficult weather, limited shop hours and accommodation constraints. It is usually more practical with luggage transfer or carefully pre-arranged lifts, particularly once the route reaches the more remote Llŷn Peninsula.

Companies such as Edge of Wales Walk offer packaged itineraries at different paces, including 5, 7, 10 and 14-day options with luggage transfer. Independent walkers should still check the actual daily distances, overnight locations and transport links before committing to a compressed schedule.

### **Section-hiking the route**

Section hiking is easiest on the northern half, where Flint, Prestatyn, Rhyl, Bangor and the North Wales coast line give better rail access, with bus links to places such as Holywell, St Asaph, Penmaenmawr, Abergwyngregyn and Bangor. The Llŷn Peninsula is more remote and relies more heavily on local TrawsCymru and Gwynedd buses towards places such as Nefyn and Aberdaron.

For a practical split, many walkers treat **Holywell to Bangor** as the first half and **Bangor to Aberdaron** as the second. The second half needs more careful accommodation and transport planning, especially beyond Clynnog Fawr and along the western Llŷn coast.

# Planning the Route

## How many days to allow

Most walkers should plan this as a two-week route. The standard 14-day schedule keeps most days in the 16–19 km range, which is a sensible pace once accommodation gaps, ascent, weather and village facilities are taken into account.

Fast walkers can compress the route into around 10 days, but that leaves less margin for poor weather, late starts, navigation errors and limited evening food options. A slower 15–17 day plan is often more practical if you want time at the churches, holy wells and coastal sites rather than treating the route as a continuous mileage exercise.

Walking holiday companies also package shorter 5, 7 and 10-day versions, usually by selecting sections and using transfers. For an independent end-to-end walk, 14 days is the planning baseline.

## Accommodation dictates the stages

Accommodation is the main constraint on the North Wales Pilgrim's Way. This is not a route where you can reliably walk until tired and find a bed in the next village.

The official route website advises that accommodation on or near the route can be difficult on the early sections. The same applies through parts of the central rural interior, where villages such as Gwytherin, Llanefydd, Pandy Tudur and Llangernyw have very limited options.

Book accommodation before finalising daily distances. In practice, where you sleep often decides the stage plan, especially between Holywell / Treffynnon and St Asaph / Llanelwy, through the Gwytherin and Llanefydd area, around Rowen, and later at Clynnog Fawr.

Bangor and Llanberis are the easiest accommodation hubs, with multiple options. Aberdaron has several B&Bs and The Ship Hotel, but capacity is still limited and should be booked months ahead in peak season, especially if adding a spare day for the Bardsey boat.

Planning issue	Practical implication
Early-stage accommodation gaps	Do not assume every village has a bed; book the first few nights carefully.
Small rural stops	Some places may have only one or two realistic options.
Groups	Book the full route before travelling; small villages cannot absorb last-minute groups.
Peak season	July, August, bank holidays and school holidays make the Llŷn Peninsula harder to book.
Online booking	Check that the property is genuinely on or near the route; repeated Welsh place and property names can cause mistakes.

Midweek starts can improve availability at smaller establishments. Hostels and bunkhouses exist at strategic points, including YHA and independent options, and Llanberis has a YHA youth hostel.

## Food and water planning

Food planning matters more than on busier national trails. Some stages pass through small villages where shops, pubs or cafés may be absent, closed, seasonal or limited in opening hours.

Carry enough food for the walking day, particularly lunch and emergency snacks. Do not rely on finding supplies in every overnight stop.

Water should be topped up whenever there is a reliable opportunity at accommodation, cafés or settlements. Higher and more rural sections should be treated as carry-what-you-need days unless facilities have been checked in advance.

Around Rowen, Malwen Cafe has limited opening days and hours, and Hen Felin Cafe serves Abergwyngregyn; current opening should be checked before relying on either. Evening meals should also be arranged in advance where staying in small villages or self-catering accommodation.

## Section hiking and shortening the route

The route works well as a section hike, particularly in the northern half. The official route can be walked end-to-end or dipped into in separate blocks.

The North Wales Coast Line makes access comparatively straightforward at Flint, Prestatyn, Rhyl, Llanfairfechan and Bangor. Llanfairfechan is a useful access or exit point for the Carneddau foothills section, while Bangor is the strongest mid-route hub, with rail links from Manchester, London via Crewe, and Holyhead.

The central interior is much less convenient for public transport. Around Gwytherin, Llanefydd and Llangernyw, section hikers should expect to use a car, a pre-arranged taxi or a walking package transfer.

The Llŷn Peninsula is also harder to break into short public-transport sections. Local buses include services 8/8A/8B between Pwllheli, Nefyn and Morfa Nefyn, and 17/17B to Aberdaron. A seasonal fflecsi bookable service covers parts of the western Llŷn, including Aberdaron and Nefyn, on limited days and hours; this should be checked before travelling.

## Bardsey Island planning

Bardsey Island / Ynys Enlli is optional and must be planned separately from the walking route. The main land route ends at Aberdaron; the island crossing is not guaranteed.

Boats depart from Porth Meudwy, about 1.8 km from Aberdaron by the coast path. Bardsey Island Boat Trips, operated by Colin Evans, takes bookings by phone or WhatsApp on +44 7971 769895. Advance booking is strongly advised.

The boat runs broadly from April to October when weather and tide allow. The crossing takes about 20 minutes each way, with roughly four hours on the island on a typical day trip.

Build at least one spare day into Aberdaron if Bardsey matters to the trip. Do not book onward travel for the morning after arriving in Aberdaron and assume the boat will run.

Porth Meudwy has no toilet facilities, so use facilities in Aberdaron beforehand. Access is via a National Trust car park and a downhill walk to the beach. Dogs are not permitted on Bardsey Island.

There is a Bardsey Island landing fee of £7.50 per adult in 2026, with children under 18 free; current fees should be checked before travelling.

## Navigation and route documents

The route is waymarked, but do not rely on waymarks alone. The central rural sections, open foothills and coastal stretches all require proper navigation, especially in poor visibility or after long wet periods when field paths can be less obvious.

Useful planning tools include the official guidebook, *North Wales Pilgrim's Way: The Official Guide to the Welsh Camino* by Chris Potter, and GPX files from the official North Wales Pilgrim's Way site or the British Pilgrimage Trust. The route is also available on mapping platforms including OS Maps, komoot and Outdooractive.

Carry offline mapping and a power strategy for a full day away from charging. A printed map or guidebook backup is sensible on this route, particularly where phone signal and battery life cannot be assumed.

A Pilgrim Passport is available free and can be stamped at 23 churches and sacred sites along the way. Collect it before starting or at the start if completing the route as a pilgrimage rather than only as a long-distance walk.

## Weather and seasonal planning

Spring and autumn are usually the best walking seasons: cooler days, usable daylight and fewer accommodation pressures than high summer. April–May and September–October also align better with the broad Bardsey boat season.

July and August bring the warmest weather but also the busiest accommodation period, especially on the Llŷn Peninsula. Book well ahead if walking in school holidays or around bank holidays.

The Carneddau foothills between Rowen, Penmaenmawr and the Bwlch y Ddeufaen area are exposed to wind, rain and low cloud. The Llŷn coastal sections are also weather-exposed, so full waterproofs are needed in every season.

## Transport and luggage options

For an independent start, Holywell / Treffynnon is commonly reached via the North Wales Coast Line and local onward transport, often using Flint as the rail access point. This should be checked before travelling.

For the finish, Aberdaron is more remote. Local bus links connect towards Pwllheli, where rail onward travel is available; timetables should be checked carefully, especially outside summer and at weekends.

Self-guided packages reduce much of the logistical burden. Edge of Wales Walk offers 5, 7, 10 and 14-day packages, luggage transfer by minibus, route information, maps, a GPS guide unit, accommodation arrangements and optional Bardsey arrangements. Pickups can be arranged from Manchester Airport or train stations at Bangor or Flint; current prices should be requested directly.

Local taxis can also help with awkward accommodation transfers, missed buses or section hiking. In rural parts of the route, taxis should be booked ahead rather than assumed available at short notice.

## Permits, fees and the best planning order

No permit is needed to walk the route itself. The main paid extra is the Bardsey landing fee if taking the optional island trip.

The most reliable planning order is:

1. Decide the total number of walking days, with 14 days as the standard end-to-end plan.
2. Book all accommodation before fixing the final stage plan.
3. If visiting Bardsey, book the boat early and add a spare day in Aberdaron.
4. Arrange transport to Holywell / Treffynnon and return travel from Aberdaron.
5. Download the GPX, obtain the guidebook and collect the Pilgrim Passport.
6. Check food options, bus timetables and any taxi transfers for the rural and Llŷn sections.
7. Recheck weather and the Bardsey sailing status immediately before the final days.

## Towns, Villages and Overnight Stops

Accommodation planning is one of the main logistical challenges on the North Wales Pilgrim's Way. The inland northern half has several small villages with only one pub, one B&B or no hiker services at all, so daily stages often need to be built around available beds rather than ideal mileage.

Book early, especially between Holywell / Treffynnon and Rowen, and again on the more remote Llŷn Peninsula. Village pubs, cafes and shops can have limited hours, particularly on Sundays and outside the main season; call ahead where an evening meal or packed lunch is essential.

Best service hubs	Why they matter
Holywell / Treffynnon	Best place to arrive the night before, visit St Winefride's Well and stock up before starting.
St Asaph / Llanelwy	Main early-route service point, with shops, food and onward buses.
Llangernyw	Useful inland overnight stop with pub, shop and accommodation.
Penmaenmawr / Llanfairfechan	Coastal resupply and rail access after the upland Carneddau foothills crossing.
Bangor	Biggest city and most reliable resupply point on the whole route.
Waunfawr / Penygroes	Practical staging points before and into the Llŷn section.
Nefyn	Last town with a proper range of services before the remote coastal finale.
Aberdaron	Natural final overnight stop, with food, accommodation and access to Porth Meudwy for the Bardsey boat.

### Holywell / Treffynnon and Greenfield / Maes-Glas

Holywell / Treffynnon is the practical start base, while the route itself begins below the town in the Greenfield / Maes-Glas valley at Basingwerk Abbey, close to St Winefride's Well / Ffynnon Gwenfrewi. It is the best place to arrive the night before the walk, buy supplies and visit the well before setting off.

Accommodation in Holywell includes Hotel Victoria on the High Street, St Winefride's Guest House on New Road and the Stamford Gate Hotel on Halkyn Road. In the Greenfield area, options include Stokyn Hall B&B and The Pilgrims Air B&B.

Holywell has the best facilities at the start of the route, with supermarkets, shops, cafes, pubs and fast food. The Well Inn sits next to St Winefride's Well, and the well itself has a cafe serving light lunches, teas and similar daytime food.

For public transport, Flint railway station is about 5 km away, and regular buses link Holywell with Chester, Rhyl and the A55 corridor. This makes Holywell one of the easier points for joining or leaving the route.

## **Pantasaph**

Pantasaph is a small hamlet early in the walk, notable for Pantasaph Friary. It is pilgrim-relevant, but not a strong overnight base unless accommodation has been arranged nearby.

Facilities are very limited and there is no village shop. Carry food and water through this section rather than relying on Pantasaph for resupply.

## **Whitford / Chwitffordd**

Whitford / Chwitffordd sits near Maen Achwyfan, the early-medieval wheel-cross stone that is one of the important early highlights of the route. The village is mainly a passing point rather than a service stop.

There are no significant hiker facilities in the village itself. Plan to continue to a booked overnight stop rather than expecting food, shops or accommodation here.

## **Llanasa**

Llanasa can work as a quiet early-route overnight stop if accommodation has been secured. Options include Tan y Bryn Cottage and Emlyn's Coppice glamping, a woodland glamping site in an orchard about 1.3 km from the village with tent pitches, composting toilet and fresh water.

There is no village shop, though there is a pub in the village. Check food arrangements before travelling, especially if arriving late.

## **Trelawnyd**

Trelawnyd is a small village about 1 km off the main route, useful mainly where accommodation availability makes the detour worthwhile. Off-grid orchard camping is available.

Facilities are limited but better than in some nearby villages: there is a store at the garage and a garden centre cafe. Treat it as a supplementary stop, not a full resupply town.

## **Tremeirchion**

Tremeirchion is an important pilgrim stop, with Corpus Christi church and the community-run Salusbury Arms. It can be a useful staging point in the early inland section, where accommodation is sparse.

Accommodation includes Ffynnon Bueno Shepherds Huts. There is no village shop, and the pub is the main food and drink option, so opening hours and meal availability should be checked before travelling.

## **Waen**

Waen is used on some stage plans as a night stop before or after St Asaph / Llanelwy. Accommodation includes Corn Bŵch Campsite, which is tents only, and Shepherds Hideaway on the Waen near St Asaph.

There are no shops, so it should be treated as a booked-bed or camping stop rather than a resupply point. Carry an evening meal or arrange food in advance if not eating elsewhere.

## **St Asaph / Llanelwy**

St Asaph / Llanelwy is the main service hub for the early inland part of the route. It is a useful place to pause, resupply and reset after the first rural stages.

Accommodation includes the Talardy Hotel, with Penisar Mynydd Caravan Park about 2.5 miles away in Rhualt. Food options include shops, pubs, cafes, fast food and the Talardy Hotel restaurant; Jacob's Ladder Cafe near the cathedral is useful, but closes at weekends.

St Asaph Cathedral is a Pilgrim Passport stamping point and one of the key reasons to route through the city. Buses run to Rhyl, Prestatyn and Denbigh, giving St Asaph useful public transport value for section walkers.

## **Llanefydd**

Llanefydd is a quiet hilltop village and a common early stage end. It is a genuine overnight stop, but with very few beds, so booking is essential.

Accommodation includes the Hawk and Buckle pub, Talybryn B&B and Yr Atodiad. The Hawk and Buckle is the main food and drink option, and there is no village shop.

Do not arrive without a dinner plan. If the pub is closed or fully booked, there are few easy alternatives within the village.

## **Llansannan**

Llansannan is a small market village in the Elwy valley and has more practical facilities than several neighbouring settlements. It is useful for water, food and a short resupply.

Accommodation includes Hendre Aled, The Red Lion with rooms, Bodger's Cabin and Crosby Scout Hut for groups. The village shop and Post Office make Llansannan a valuable stop on the inland section.

## **Gwytherin**

Gwytherin is one of the most important pilgrim villages on the route, associated with St Winefride and her relics. It is also a key practical overnight stop between Llanefydd and Llangernyw.

Accommodation includes The Lion Inn, Y Llew Bach cottage, Minafon Cottage and Eirianfa. The Lion Inn is the main overnight and food option, with six en-suite rooms and meals, but opening hours are limited and should be checked before travelling.

There is no village shop. Book well ahead and do not rely on buying provisions here.

## **Pandy Tudur**

Pandy Tudur is a very small hamlet that the route passes through quickly. It has limited or no accommodation for most walkers.

Treat it as a navigation point rather than an overnight stop. Food, water and onward accommodation should be planned before reaching this section.

## Llangernyw

Llangernyw is one of the better inland overnight stops, with both accommodation and basic resupply. St Digain's church, with its ancient yew, is a route holy site and Pilgrim Passport stamping point.

Accommodation includes The Old Stag pub, Wern Bach B&B just outside the village and Glampio Pen Y Gloddfa. The Old Stag serves meals and ales, while the village shop and Post Office make Llangernyw a useful place to restock.

This is a practical place to stay before the route turns towards the Conwy Valley and the higher ground beyond Rowen.

## Eglwysbach

Eglwysbach is a small Conwy Valley village and can serve as a modest overnight or camping stop. Accommodation includes The Backtrack Campsite and Groesonnen Farm B&B.

There is a pub but no village shop. Carry supplies or arrange meals in advance if staying here.

## Rowen and Ty'n-y-Groes

Rowen is one of the most useful hiker villages before the Carneddau foothills crossing. Stage plans often use Ty'n-y-Groes near Rowen as an overnight area before heading towards the high moorland around Bwlch y Ddeufaen.

The Tŷ Gwyn Hotel and pub is the centrepiece, offering rooms, food and cask ales. Other options include Conwy Valley Barn bunkhouse, Y Llew Coch B&B and Cefn Cae Campsite, which is popular with walkers year-round.

There is no village shop, so Rowen is strong for accommodation and pub food but weak for resupply. It is a sensible night stop before the route climbs towards the prehistoric landscape above Penmaenmawr.

## Penmaenmawr

Penmaenmawr is a small coastal town reached after the Carneddau foothills crossing and the Druids' Circle / Meini Hirion area. It is useful as a recovery and resupply stop after the rougher upland section.

Accommodation includes Tyddyn Du Touring Park and Noddfa Retreat Centre. The town has several shops, cafes and pubs, plus a seafront cafe.

Penmaenmawr station is on the North Wales Coast Line, with rail links towards Llandudno Junction, Bangor, Chester and Crewe. This makes it one of the best places for section walkers to join or leave the route.

## Llanfairfechan

Llanfairfechan is a seaside town used by some itineraries around the Day 7 to Day 8 transition. It has better facilities than the rural villages immediately before it.

Accommodation includes Platt's Farm Bunkhouse and B&B. There are pubs, cafes and shops for a reasonable resupply.

Llanfairfechan station is also on the North Wales Coast Line, giving it strong transport value for section hiking or itinerary adjustment.

## **Abergwyngregyn / Aber**

Abergwyngregyn, often shortened to Aber, sits at the foot of the Carneddau near the A55. It is best known on this walk as the access village for Aber Falls / Rhaeadr Fawr.

The village has cafes, including Aber Falls Cafe, which serves coffees, cakes and toasted panini. However, there is no accommodation on the Pilgrim's Way accommodation list for the village itself, so many walkers continue towards Bangor or use nearby farm B&Bs.

The Aber Falls side trip is one of the route's strongest natural highlights, but it adds time and should be planned around daylight and onward accommodation.

## **Bangor**

Bangor is the biggest service hub on the route and the last major city before the more remote Llŷn Peninsula. Use it for a full resupply, equipment fixes, pharmacy needs, cash and any itinerary reset.

Accommodation ranges from hotels, B&Bs, guesthouses and hostels to farm accommodation such as Fferm Pandy on the Pilgrim's Way about 3–4 miles from the city centre. YHA Conwy is a few miles east of the route and may suit some low-cost itineraries.

Bangor has supermarkets, pubs, restaurants, cafes, outdoor gear shops and full city services. Bangor Cathedral is a Pilgrim Passport stamping point and one of the route's major religious sites.

Bangor railway station is on the North Wales Coast Line, with trains towards Chester, Manchester, London Euston and Holyhead. Regular buses also run to places including Caernarfon, Bethesda and Conwy.

## **Llanberis**

Llanberis is not on every direct main-route itinerary, but it is a useful nearby mountain town around the Bangor, Rhiwlas and Waunfawr part of the walk. It may suit walkers who need lower-cost accommodation or a route adjustment.

YHA Llanberis is a recognised low-cost option. The town has pubs, cafes and shops, and buses connect Llanberis with Bangor and Caernarfon.

## **Rhiwlas**

Rhiwlas appears as an overnight point on some 14-day stage plans between Llanllechid and Waunfawr. It is a staging location rather than a major service centre.

Accommodation, food and transport options here should be checked before travelling. Do not assume the same level of facilities as Bangor or Waunfawr.

## **Waunfawr**

Waunfawr is a strong practical overnight stop before the route pushes further into the Llŷn Peninsula. It sits about 4 miles from the foot of Snowdon and has good hiker facilities for a village.

Accommodation includes Snowdonia Parc Brewpub and Campsite, Snowdonia Hideaway, nearby Pentre Bach Bunkhouse and Bryn Gloch Caravan and Camping Park within about a mile. Snowdonia Parc offers camping, glamping pods and pub food, with real ales brewed on site.

There is a village shop a short walk away. The Welsh Highland Railway / Rheilffordd Eryri passes through Waunfawr, with narrow-gauge steam railway services between Caernarfon and Porthmadog that may be useful for a section transfer or emergency exit.

## **Penygroes**

Penygroes is a small town with reasonable facilities and is more useful than many of the smaller Llŷn settlements. It can be an important resupply point before Clynnog Fawr.

Accommodation includes The Woolen Mill, The Hayloft and options around Pant Du cafe. The town has pubs, cafes and shops.

Use Penygroes to buy food before continuing to Clynnog Fawr, where services are more limited.

## **Clynnog Fawr**

Clynnog Fawr is one of the major pilgrim stops, centred on St Beuno's Church / Eglwys Sant Beuno. The church is a Pilgrim Passport stamping point and was a key medieval waypoint on the road to Bardsey.

Accommodation includes Henbant Bach farm, Ysgubor Wen Eco Camping, St Beuno House for groups and several nearby B&B cottages. Food options are limited: there is a petrol station forecourt shop close to the church and a pub in the village, but no independent cafe.

Do not treat Clynnog Fawr as a full resupply stop. Stock up in Penygroes before arriving, and check church opening hours before travelling; it is generally open daily from Easter to October.

## **Trefor**

Trefor is a quarrying and fishing village at the foot of Yr Eifl / The Rivals. It is useful mainly for camping and a simple village stop between Clynnog Fawr and the northern Llŷn coast.

Aberafon Camping sits by the beach at the entrance to the village. Trefor has a small post office and convenience store, and Clwb-y-Tur serves drinks and simple food.

There is no hotel or B&B in the village, so camping is the main option. Nant Gwrtheyrn, the Welsh Language and Heritage Centre in a nearby remote valley, offers some accommodation in heritage cottages.

## **Llithfaen**

Llithfaen is a very small village on the northern Llŷn slopes near Yr Eifl. Some itineraries use it as an inland stage end.

Facilities are limited and there are no significant hiker services. Accommodation should be arranged before committing to a stage that finishes here.

## Nefyn and Morfa Nefyn

Nefyn is the main coastal service town on the northern Llŷn and the best resupply point between Waunfawr or Penygroes and Aberdaron. It is a sensible place to top up food before the more remote southern coastal stages.

Accommodation includes the Nanhoron Hotel, Llys Olwen, Tyn Y Coed Touring Park and numerous hotels, B&Bs and holiday cottages in and around Nefyn and Morfa Nefyn. The town has shops, cafes and pubs.

Morfa Nefyn has Y Bryncynan pub, and the Porth Dinllaen detour leads to the Tŷ Coch Inn on the beach. It is reached by a walk from Morfa Nefyn and is best planned around tide times and opening hours.

## Pistyll

Pistyll is tiny but important for pilgrims. St Beuno's Church, Pistyll is an unaltered 12th-century church with a rare leper window, and there was a medieval hospice site nearby at Cefnydd.

There is no accommodation or hiker infrastructure in Pistyll itself. Most walkers continue to Nefyn or push on towards Tudweiliog, depending on the day's booked accommodation.

## Tudweiliog / Towyn

Tudweiliog / Towyn is a modest but valuable service point on the Llŷn section. It becomes particularly useful because the coast beyond here feels more remote.

Accommodation includes the Lion Hotel, Gerwen B&B and Towyn Farm Campsite. The village has a shop with a Post Office, making it a useful food and water resupply before the final coastal push.

## Porth Oer / Whistling Sands

Porth Oer, also known as Whistling Sands, is a remote National Trust beach and an important landmark near the end of the route. It is not an overnight service centre.

There is no accommodation here. A seasonal National Trust cafe usually operates from Easter to autumn, but opening should be checked before travelling.

Most walkers continue from this area to Aberdaron, allowing enough time for the exposed clifftop walking and any weather delays.

## Aberdaron and Porth Meudwy

Aberdaron is the natural final overnight stop on the mainland route. It is compact, practical and well set up for walkers finishing the trail or waiting for a Bardsey Island / Ynys Enlli crossing.

Accommodation includes Gwesty'r Llong / The Ship Hotel, Gwesty Tŷ Newydd / Ty Newydd Hotel and multiple self-catering cottages and holiday lets. Both main pubs serve food, and the village also has a Spar convenience store, bakery, cafes and an ice cream shop.

St Hywyn's Church is the final mainland Pilgrim Passport stamping point and one of the major pilgrimage sites on the route. The Wales Coast Path passes through the village.

Porth Meudwy is the small cove used for the Bardsey boat, about 1.8 km from Aberdaron by the coast path. Tir Glyn Camping is at Porth Meudwy and can be useful for walkers waiting for a crossing day.

## **Bardsey Island / Ynys Enlli**

Bardsey Island / Ynys Enlli is an optional final leg, not a guaranteed finish. Passenger boats run from Porth Meudwy and must be booked in advance directly with the boat operator (Bardsey Island Boat Trips / Mordaith Llŷn, run by Colin Evans); the separate island landing fee is payable to the Bardsey Island Trust. All crossings depend on weather and tide.

The boat season is broadly spring to autumn, but sailings can be cancelled. Build flexibility into accommodation and onward travel plans if the island matters to the trip.

Facilities on the island are very limited. There is no cafe, pub or shop, and overnight stays require advance booking of Bardsey Island Trust holiday cottages, which are limited and often need to be arranged months ahead.

## Getting to the Start

The route starts at Basingwerk Abbey in Greenfield Valley, Greenfield / Maes-Glas, on the edge of Holywell / Treffynnon in Flintshire. The practical start point is the Cadw-managed abbey car park area at grid reference SJ194774, with St Winefride's Well in Holywell forming the traditional spiritual starting point nearby.

Holywell town centre is about 1.5 km uphill from the abbey. Greenfield has the start of the walk, but most shops, pubs, accommodation and onward bus options are in Holywell itself.

### By train

Holywell does not have a railway station. The nearest station is Flint / Fflint, on the North Wales Main Line, about 5 miles / 8 km from Holywell Bus Station and Basingwerk Abbey.

Flint is the usual railhead for walkers arriving by public transport. From there, take a bus towards Holywell, use the local fflecsi service where available, or pre-book a taxi for the short transfer to the abbey or your accommodation.

Starting city	Rail approach to Flint	Typical notes
Chester	Direct Transport for Wales trains to Flint	Journey is usually under 15 minutes, with regular services through the day.
Liverpool	Travel via Chester, then change for a North Wales-bound train to Flint	Total journey is usually around 1–1.5 hours depending on connections.
Manchester Piccadilly	Direct Transport for Wales trains to Flint	Services run roughly every 2 hours; journey time is about 1 hour 40 minutes.
North Wales coast	Use the North Wales Main Line via stations such as Rhyl, Llandudno Junction, Bangor and Holyhead	Useful for walkers already in North Wales.

From Flint station to Holywell or Basingwerk Abbey, taxis typically take about 9–10 minutes and are often in the £8–15 range. Pre-booking is sensible, especially if arriving late, on a Sunday, or with a group; local operators include Valley Cars Flintshire, and price-comparison platforms such as Minicabit may be useful.

Train times, late services and engineering works should be checked shortly before travel through Transport for Wales or National Rail. This should be checked before travelling.

### By bus

Holywell Bus Station is the main bus hub for the start of the walk. From there, either walk downhill to Greenfield and Basingwerk Abbey, take the short local bus hop where running, or use a taxi.

Two bus stops are very close to the abbey itself: Abbey View, Greenfield and Packet House, Greenfield, both within roughly 70–80 metres of the start area.

Service	Useful for	Notes
Arriva Cymru 11 / 11A / 11C / 11M / 11X	Chester Bus Interchange to Holywell via Queensferry and Connah's Quay	Frequent daytime service on the Chester–Holywell corridor, usually about 1 hour 15–20 minutes from Chester. No Sunday service is normally listed.
P & O Lloyd F18 / F19	Flint to Holywell, with onward links towards Prestatyn and Rhyl	Useful for connecting from Flint station, but frequency is more limited.
P & O Lloyd 23	Greenfield to Holywell	Handy for the short link between the abbey area and Holywell town.
TfW fflecsi	Demand-responsive local travel around Holywell	Generally operates Monday–Saturday daytime; book via the fflecsi app or by phone.

There is no direct bus from Liverpool or Manchester to Holywell; the usual public-transport approach is to travel via Chester, then continue by train or bus. Current bus times should be checked with Traveline Cymru, Arriva, P & O Lloyd, Flintshire County Council or the operator before setting off.

Traveline Cymru is the best single contact for Welsh bus and coach queries: 0800 464 0000. Transport for Wales travel information is available at [tfw.wales](http://tfw.wales) or 0333 321 1202.

## By car

Basingwerk Abbey is straightforward to reach by road from the A55 North Wales Expressway, using the Greenfield / Holywell access via the A5026. Typical driving times are about 25 minutes from Chester, 40–45 minutes from Liverpool, and 60–70 minutes from Manchester, depending on traffic.

There is free parking at Basingwerk Abbey in a small Cadw-managed car park, but it should be treated as short-stay or day-use parking. It is not a suitable place to leave a vehicle for the full two-week walk.

For a full-route walk, decide where the vehicle will be left before booking accommodation. Options include pay-and-display car parks in Holywell town centre, longer-stay options in Flint such as the Jade Jones Leisure Centre car park, or leaving a car near the finish and travelling to the start by public transport; charges, time limits and overnight rules should be checked directly before relying on them.

A two-car plan is awkward on this route because the finish at Aberdaron is far away on the Llŷn Peninsula. If driving, it is usually better to think of the car as part of a wider return-transport plan rather than simply parking at the start and sorting the journey home later.

Aberdaron has limited public transport, with TrawsCymru / Gwynedd bus links providing the main way back off the Llŷn Peninsula. Return travel from Aberdaron should be planned before starting the walk. This should be checked before travelling.

## From the nearest airport

Liverpool John Lennon Airport is the closest airport by distance, about 28 miles from Holywell by road. Public transport from Liverpool Airport to Holywell is less direct: expect to travel via Liverpool and Chester, then continue towards Flint or Holywell by train and bus.

Manchester Airport is farther away, about 59 miles by road, but is often the more practical airport for rail access. Direct Transport for Wales trains run from Manchester Airport to Flint roughly every 2 hours,

taking about 1 hour 40 minutes, followed by a bus or taxi to Holywell or Basingwerk Abbey.

Neither airport has a dedicated shuttle to Holywell. Pre-booked airport transfers are available from local transfer firms in Flintshire, and may be worthwhile for groups, late arrivals or walkers carrying a full long-distance kit.

## Where to stay before starting

Staying in or near Holywell the night before is the simplest option, especially if starting with a visit to St Winefride's Well before walking down to Basingwerk Abbey. Holywell has more services than Greenfield, but the abbey start lies downhill from the town.

Practical pre-walk accommodation options include:

Place	Why it works
St Winefride's Guest House, Holywell	Pilgrim-focused accommodation run by the Bridgettine Sisters, close to St Winefride's Well. B&B, half-board and full-board may be available; groups can be arranged by prior contact.
Glan Yr Afon Inn, Greenfield	Very close to the route start near the Dee Estuary and Basingwerk Abbey.
Springfield Hotel, Pentre Halkyn	A larger hotel on the A55 near Holywell, useful for car arrivals.
Pantasaph Farm Guest House, Pantasaph	On or near the first stage, useful either for the night before or as a very early first stopping point.

Holywell and Flint also have a wider spread of B&Bs and guesthouses. Book ahead in summer, at weekends, and around St Winefride's Day on 3 November, when Holywell can be busier than expected.

If arriving late, choose accommodation with a clear check-in arrangement and pre-book the final taxi or bus link from Flint. The first day is much easier when the start logistics are settled before reaching North Wales.

## Getting Home from the Finish

Aberdaron is a remote finish at the tip of Penrhyn Llŷn, so the journey home needs planning before the final walking day. The normal exit route is by bus or taxi to Pwllheli, then by train on the Cambrian Coast Line.

If you are adding the optional Bardsey Island / Ynys Enlli boat from Porth Meudwy, treat it as an extra day rather than a quick add-on before travelling home. Boats are pre-booked, tide- and weather-dependent, and afternoon returns make same-day long-distance travel awkward.

### By train

The nearest railhead is **Pwllheli**, the western terminus of the Cambrian Coast Line. Aberdaron has no railway station, so you first need to reach Pwllheli by bus, taxi or pre-arranged transfer.

From Pwllheli, Transport for Wales trains run via **Barmouth, Machynlleth and Shrewsbury**, with onward connections towards **Birmingham, Chester, Manchester Piccadilly** and **Cardiff**. Some journeys involve a change at Machynlleth or Dovey Junction.

Rail leg	Practical notes
Aberdaron to Pwllheli	Bus, taxi or pre-arranged transfer required
Pwllheli to Shrewsbury	About 3 hours 45 minutes; changes may be required
Frequency	Roughly every 2 hours, with around 4–5 trains per day each way; fewer on Sundays
Onward links	Shrewsbury gives connections to Birmingham New Street, Chester, Manchester Piccadilly and Cardiff

Pwllheli station is close to the town centre on New Street / Penlan Street and has a car park with 57 spaces. Walkers reaching Pwllheli by mid-afternoon usually have a better choice of onward trains; late arrivals may need to stay in Pwllheli or accept a very long travel evening.

Do not plan tight connections from the Cambrian Coast Line. It is a scenic rural line with limited frequency, so allow a sensible buffer at Machynlleth and Shrewsbury. Current times and fares should be checked before travelling via Transport for Wales or National Rail.

### By bus

The main bus link from the finish is **Route 17**, operated by Berwyn Coaches, between **Aberdaron and Pwllheli** via **Botwnnog, Sarn Meyllteyrn, Mynytho and Llanbedrog**. The direct journey is about 40 minutes, while the 17B circular variant can take longer.

Service	Route and usefulness	Key cautions
Route 17	Aberdaron to Pwllheli; the main onward public transport link	Monday–Saturday only; around 6–7 departures daily; last bus from Aberdaron is around 18:55

Service	Route and usefulness	Key cautions
Route 17B	Circular variant serving the wider area	Monday–Saturday only; fewer departures and a longer journey
fflecsi Llŷn	Demand-responsive seasonal service connecting western Llŷn, including Aberdaron, with Pwllheli	Broadly summer season (check current dates); pre-book via the fflecsi app or call 0300 234 0300

There is **no regular Sunday Route 17/17B bus from Aberdaron**. In summer, fflecsi Llŷn can be useful on Sundays, but it is demand-responsive and must be booked rather than treated as a turn-up-and-go service.

If finishing on a Saturday, check the final bus time before committing to a late arrival in Aberdaron. If finishing on a Sunday outside the fflecsi season, pre-arranged taxi transport is the practical fallback.

Bus times are timetable-dependent and rural services can change. Check Traveline Cymru, Transport for Wales or Gwynedd Council timetables before the walk, and again shortly before the final stage.

## By car/taxi

A taxi is the simplest way to leave Aberdaron if bus times do not fit, particularly on Sundays, early mornings or after the optional Bardsey boat day. Local operators serving the area include Coastal Cabs, Evans Taxi, B&M Taxis and Wave Cars.

The road journey from Aberdaron to Pwllheli is roughly 30–35 minutes by car via the B4413 and Botwnnog. Typical taxi fares to Pwllheli are roughly **£30–£45**, but prices vary, so agree the fare and pickup point when booking.

Taxis can in principle take walkers farther, such as towards Bangor or Caernarfon, but costs rise significantly. For most independent walkers, Aberdaron to Pwllheli by taxi, then train onward, is the more economical plan.

If using a car shuttle, Pwllheli is often more practical than Aberdaron because it has the railway station and onward bus link. Pwllheli station car park has 57 spaces; availability and any parking conditions should be checked before relying on it for a long stay.

## From the nearest airport

There is no convenient commercial airport close to Aberdaron or Pwllheli. **Liverpool John Lennon Airport** and **Manchester Airport** are the nearest practical options, both requiring a long overland journey from the Llŷn Peninsula.

Manchester Airport is about 2.5–3 hours by road from Aberdaron. By public transport, expect a much longer journey using the Pwllheli train via Shrewsbury and Manchester Piccadilly, with total travel commonly taking around 5–6 hours before airport formalities.

Liverpool John Lennon Airport is about 2.5 hours by road from Aberdaron, but it is not a simple direct rail-and-bus continuation from the finish. Cardiff Wales Airport is much farther south and is generally impractical for this route.

Anyone flying home should build in an extra travel day or pre-arrange transfers. Self-guided operators such as Edge of Wales Walk can arrange collection from Bangor or Pwllheli train stations as part of a package, which may simplify end-of-walk logistics.

## Where to stay at the finish

Staying overnight in **Aberdaron** at the end of the walk is strongly recommended. The final stage is already a full walking day, and rushing for a late bus to Pwllheli and an evening train leaves little margin if weather, pace or transport timings slip.

Accommodation in Aberdaron is limited, with B&Bs, the Ship Hotel and self-catering cottages among the options. Book well ahead, especially in June, July, August and school holiday periods.

If visiting Bardsey Island / Ynys Enlli, plan to stay in or near Aberdaron for an additional night. Day boats from Porth Meudwy usually depart in the morning, spend around 4 hours on the island and return in the afternoon; after the crossing and the walk back to Aberdaron, onward travel the same day is usually tight.

Aberdaron has useful basic facilities, including a Spar convenience store / post office, cafés and a pub, but opening hours can vary seasonally. This should be checked locally if you are relying on food, cash services or supplies before the journey home.

## Which Direction Should You Walk?

The clear recommendation is to walk **east to west**, from Holywell / Treffynnon to Aberdaron, with Bardsey Island / Ynys Enlli as the optional final crossing. This is the traditional pilgrim direction, the waymarked direction, and the direction in which the route's logistics make most sense.

Walking west to east is possible, but it is a less natural way to tackle this trail. It puts the most remote transport logistics at the start, reverses the waymarking, and removes the sense of arrival at Bardsey that gives the route much of its purpose.

### Standard direction: Holywell to Aberdaron

The North Wales Pilgrim's Way is designed to run east to west. The 25 numbered sections progress from Basingwerk Abbey and St Winefride's Well at Holywell / Treffynnon across North Wales to Aberdaron, with the pre-booked boat from Porth Meudwy to Bardsey Island / Ynys Enlli as the optional final leg.

This also matches the historic pilgrim logic of the route. Medieval pilgrims travelled westwards towards Bardsey, the sacred Island of 20,000 Saints, rather than starting there and walking away from it.

The practical waymarking also favours this direction. Waymarker discs and route sequencing are set up for east-to-west travel; reverse walkers can still follow the line, but will spend more time checking junctions and interpreting signs from the back.

### Transport is easier if you start in the east

The Holywell end is much easier to reach from most parts of the UK. Flint has a mainline station on the North Wales Coast Line, with onward buses to Holywell and Greenfield, around 4–5 miles away. From the Abbey View / Greenfield area, Basingwerk Abbey is a short walk.

Aberdaron is a much more remote finish. It has no railway station; the nearest railhead is Pwllheli on the Cambrian Coast Line. Bus 17 / 17B runs between Pwllheli Bus Station and Aberdaron Post Office, broadly Monday to Saturday, with a journey of about 40 minutes, but the timetable should be checked before travelling.

There is also a seasonal fflecsi demand-responsive bus service on the Llŷn Peninsula, broadly late May to mid-September, linking Pwllheli with western Llŷn including Aberdaron. Current operating dates, booking arrangements and fares should be checked before relying on it.

Starting at Holywell means the easy mainline connection comes at the beginning, when delays are easier to absorb. The more complicated Llŷn transport comes at the end, where it can be planned around accommodation, the bus timetable and any hoped-for Bardsey boat crossing.

### The scenery builds better east to west

East to west gives the walk a strong sense of progression. The early stages move through field paths, woodland, riverside sections, small villages, holy wells and historic churches.

The middle of the route becomes more upland, crossing the Carneddau foothills behind Rowen and Penmaenmawr, including the prehistoric landscape around the Druids' Circle and Bwlch y Ddeufaen

below Tal y Fan. This is the route's main high-country section, though the trail does not summit Tal y Fan itself.

After Bangor, the character shifts again towards the edge of Eryri / Snowdonia and then the Llŷn Peninsula. The final part becomes increasingly coastal, with clifftop walking, sea views, Porth Oer / Whistling Sands and the approach to Aberdaron at the far western tip of the peninsula.

In reverse, the most dramatic coastal walking comes early. The route then finishes inland at Holywell, which is an important spiritual site, but not the traditional western goal of the pilgrimage.

## **Climbs are not a major reason to reverse the route**

There is no decisive ascent advantage in either direction. The route has sustained climbing over its full length, with around 6,035 m of total ascent by the LDWA figure and a high point of about 395 m.

The main upland effort comes through the Carneddau foothills and the Bwlch y Ddeufaen area. The Llŷn coast is lower but still undulating and exposed, with repeated small climbs and descents along clifftop sections.

Because the ascent is spread across the walk, reversing the route does not turn it into a substantially easier undertaking. Fitness for repeated 16–19 km days matters more than direction choice.

## **Wind and weather**

Prevailing winds in this part of Wales are often westerly or south-westerly. On the Llŷn coastal section, walking east to west can therefore mean facing wind more often than having it behind you.

That is only a minor argument for walking in reverse. Wind direction varies day by day, much of the route is inland, and the coastal section is only part of the overall journey. Waterproofs, warm layers and flexible pacing matter more than choosing a direction for a theoretical tailwind.

## **Accommodation and luggage flow**

Accommodation planning also favours east to west. The common 14-day stage pattern is arranged in that direction and reflects the places where beds are realistically available.

Walking west to east uses the same overnight nodes in reverse, so it is feasible for an independent walker. However, self-guided packages and luggage-transfer arrangements are generally set up for the standard east-to-west flow, and any changes should be agreed before booking.

This matters because several stopping places on the route have limited accommodation. Direction is less important than securing beds early, but following the standard flow reduces friction.

## **The finish matters on this route**

The emotional logic of the walk is strongest when Aberdaron is the finish. Arriving at the end of the Llŷn Peninsula, with Bardsey Island / Ynys Enlli offshore, gives the route its natural climax.

The optional boat from Porth Meudwy, about 1.8 km from Aberdaron by the coast path, must be pre-booked and is always weather- and tide-dependent. It should be treated as a bonus, not a guaranteed final stage, but Aberdaron is still the right place to arrive.

## Recommendation

Walk **east to west: Holywell / Treffynnon to Aberdaron**. It is the traditional pilgrim direction, the waymarked direction, the easier transport arrangement, the better scenery progression and the direction best suited to accommodation and luggage-transfer logistics.

Only consider walking west to east if there is a specific reason, such as fixed accommodation availability or a transport constraint. For most hikers, the reverse direction adds inconvenience without offering a meaningful terrain advantage.

## Accommodation Along the Route

Accommodation is one of the main planning constraints on the North Wales Pilgrim's Way. There is a workable mix of hotels, inns, B&Bs, guesthouses, bunkhouses, self-catering cottages, glamping and campsites, but there is no continuous pilgrim hostel network and no reliable chain of campsites at every stage.

Book the whole route before setting off, not just the first few nights. Several daily stages are shaped by where beds exist, especially from Clynnog Fawr onwards across the Llŷn Peninsula, where small villages, limited rooms and summer demand make last-minute planning risky.

### Accommodation by key stop

Place	Accommodation level	Best for	Notes
Holywell / Treffynnon and Greenfield	Good	Start overnight	Sensible place to stay before Day 1. Options include St Winefride's Guest House at the start, Hotel Victoria, Stamford Gate Hotel, Stokyn Hall B&B near Basingwerk Abbey and several Airbnb options in Greenfield.
Pantasaph	Limited	Short-stage adjustment only	Accommodation information is sparse; do not rely on it as a main overnight stop without booking ahead.
Trelawnyd	Limited	Camping only	Off-grid orchard camping is available by prior arrangement. No inn or B&B option is listed.
Tremeirchion	Limited	Flexible early-stage planning	The Salusbury Arms is a community pub. Ffynnon Bueno has shepherds huts, with a midweek-only limitation for single-night stays. Check terms carefully before building a stage around it.
Waen	Limited	End of Day 2 on some itineraries	Corn Bŵch Campsite is tents-only; Shepherds Hideaway offers shepherds huts. Walkers wanting a B&B may need to adjust the stage.
St Asaph / Llanelwy	Good	Night 2-3 fallback	One of the better-capacity stops in the early part of the route. The Talardy Hotel has 35 bedrooms, with a Premier Inn nearby in Rhuddlan.
Llanefydd	Limited	Night 3	Hawk and Buckle pub rooms are the key option, with Talybryn B&B and an Airbnb option. Book early.
Llansannan	Limited	Night 3-4 adjustment	The Red Lion, Hendre Aled farm cottages, an Airbnb cabin and Crosby Scout Hut for groups give some flexibility, but capacity is finite.
Gwytherin	Limited	Night 4	Important pilgrim stop but small-scale accommodation. The Lion Inn has rooms, with limited midweek opening; Y Llew Bach, Minafon Cottage and Eirianfa add self-catering/Airbnb-style options.

Place	Accommodation level	Best for	Notes
Llangernyw	Limited	Night 5	Wern Bach B&B, Glampio Pen Y Gloddfa and Glan Y Gors Campsite with Pilgrim Pods give a workable mix. Advance booking is needed; Glan Y Gors can arrange transport.
Eglwysbach	Limited	Stage adjustment	Groesonnen Farm B&B and The Backtrack Campsite provide limited options.
Rowen / Ty'n-y-Groes	Good	Night 6	One of the stronger small-village stops. Options include Ty Gwyn Hotel/pub, Y Llew Coch B&B and Tearoom, Conwy Valley Barn for groups and Cefn Cae Campsite.
Tal y Cafn	Limited	Alternative near Rowen	Tal y Cafn pub/hotel can be useful if Rowen beds are full.
Penmaenmawr / Dwygyfylchi	Limited	Night 7 area	Modest choice, including Tyddyn Du Touring Park, Noddfa Retreat Centre and Coastal View Camping. Check availability before committing.
Llanfairfechan	Limited	Night 7	Platt's Farm Bunkhouse and B&B is a key walker stop, about 10 minutes from the Pilgrim's Way, sleeping up to 10 in two bunkrooms with self-catering facilities, plus B&B and camping. Popular, so book early.
Abergwyngregyn	None	Refreshment stop, not overnight	Useful for cafés near the Aber Falls area, but not a practical overnight base. Plan beds in Llanfairfechan or Bangor.
Bangor	Good	Night 8 and resupply/rest	Best accommodation capacity on the route north of the Llŷn. Options include Bangor Youth Hostel, city hotels, B&Bs and Airbnb accommodation; Fferm Pandy at Tregarth is an off-city self-catering/community farm option.
Llanberis	Good	Night 9–10	Busy walking town with YHA Llanberis, Dol Peris and a wider range of B&Bs and hostels. Book early in the main walking season.
Waunfawr	Limited	Night 10	Pentre Bach Bunkhouse and Campsite sleeps 16 and is one of the stronger budget options on this section. Parc Snowdonia Campsite is another camping option.
Rhyd Ddu	Limited	Off-route budget option	Snowdon Ranger Youth Hostel can help if using an adjusted itinerary.
Penygroes / Nantlle Valley	Limited	Stage adjustment	The Hayloft North Wales, Ysgubor Wen Eco Camping and The Woolen Mill offer limited options. B&B/inn choice is thin.
Clynnog Fawr	Limited	Night 11, but awkward	St Beuno's Church is a key pilgrim site, but there is no inn. Camping at Henbant Bach or Ysgubor Wen Eco Camping is the main practical option.

Place	Accommodation level	Best for	Notes
Trefor	Limited	Llŷn stage adjustment	Aberafon Camping Site is the main listed option; no inn is listed.
Nant Gwrtheyrn	Good	Groups or planned detour	Slightly off-route but important for capacity: the Welsh Language Centre has accommodation for 58 guests in en-suite rooms, plus self-catering cottages for 18 more and a café on site.
Nefyn / Morfa Nefyn / Edern	Limited	Night 12	Best-served Llŷn stop between Bangor and Aberdaron. Options include Nanhoron Hotel, Tafarn Yr Heliwr, Llys Olwen, Wern campsite and Tyn Y Coed Touring Park.
Pistyll	None	Pilgrim visit, not overnight	Important church stop between Nefyn and Tudweiliog, but no accommodation is listed at Pistyll itself.
Tudweiliog	Limited	Night 13	One of the better small Llŷn stops, with Lion Hotel, Gerwen B&B, Towyn Farm Campsite and Penrallt Coastal Campsite with Pilgrim Pods and caravans.
Llangwnnadi	Limited	Coastal-stage adjustment	Ty Coch CL Campsite is a small site about 15 minutes' walk from the coast path. Very limited.
Porth Oer / Whistling Sands approach	None	Day walking only	There is almost no accommodation between Tudweiliog and Aberdaron, so the final Llŷn stage needs careful booking.
Aberdaron	Limited	Final night	Tiny finish village with limited beds. Options include The Ship Hotel, 2 Dolfor B&B, Y Gweithdy Bunkhouse, Glandwr Cottage, Manaros Self-Catering Cottage and Afallon for larger groups. Book months ahead for summer weekends.
Porth Meudwy	Limited	Boat-departure logistics	Tir Glyn Camping is at the boat departure point. Useful only if it fits the Bardsey crossing plan.
Bardsey Island / Ynys Enlli	Limited	Occasional longer stay	Bardsey Island Trust cottages are very limited and generally suit weekly rental rather than a normal trail overnight. Most walkers visit by day only, on the pre-booked boat from Porth Meudwy (booked with the operator, Bardsey Island Boat Trips / Mordaith Llŷn).

## Where booking pressure is highest

The hardest section is the Llŷn Peninsula from Clynnog Fawr to Aberdaron. Clynnog Fawr has camping rather than inn accommodation, Trefor has no listed inn, Pistyll is not an overnight stop, and there is almost no accommodation between Tudweiliog and Aberdaron.

Aberdaron is the most important booking on the whole route. It is the symbolic finish, the base for the optional Bardsey boat, and a very small village with limited rooms; for summer weekends, secure accommodation months ahead.

The northern half is easier but still not casual. Holywell / Greenfield, St Asaph, Rowen, Bangor and Llanberis provide the best fallback capacity, while Llanefydd, Gwytherin, Llangernyw and Llanfairfechan can fill quickly because each has only a small number of suitable walker beds.

## **Does the route work inn-to-inn?**

Inn-to-inn walking is realistic on parts of the route, especially from Holywell to Bangor where towns and larger villages give more choice. It becomes harder south of Bangor and significantly harder on the Llŷn, where camping, bunkhouses, self-catering and occasional off-route transfers may be needed.

Walkers who want a bed every night should plan stages around confirmed accommodation rather than fixed mileage. Do not assume that every named village has a pub with rooms, a B&B or a shop nearby.

## **Camping and bunkhouses**

Camping can make the route more flexible, particularly on the Llŷn, but there is no continuous campsite infrastructure. Useful sites and simple accommodation include Corn Bŵch Campsite near Waen, Glan Y Gors near Llangernyw, Cefn Cae near Rowen, Platt's Farm at Llanfairfechan, Pentre Bach near Waunfawr, Henbant Bach near Clynnog Fawr, Aberafon at Trefor, Wern near Nefyn, Penrallt and Towyn Farm near Tudweiliog, and Tir Glyn at Porth Meudwy.

Bunkhouses are valuable where they exist. Platt's Farm, Pentre Bach and Y Gweithdy in Aberdaron are especially relevant to walkers trying to keep costs down or avoid carrying full camping kit.

## **Luggage transfer, packages and awkward gaps**

Self-guided packages are a practical solution for this route because they combine accommodation planning with luggage movement. Edge of Wales Walk offers full-route and Llŷn Peninsula walking holidays over 5, 7, 10 and 14 days, using guest houses, hotels and self-catering accommodation, with luggage transfer by minibus and optional Bardsey boat arrangements.

VIP Wales offers luggage transfer, with bags collected by 8:30am and delivered to the next accommodation before 5pm. This can make the route more manageable if staying in bunkhouses, inns and B&Bs rather than carrying camping gear.

Off-route transfers can also help where the nearest bed is away from the line, but local availability should not be assumed. This should be checked before travelling.

## **Practical booking strategy**

Book the route in this order: Aberdaron first, then Tudweiliog, Nefyn, Clynnog Fawr or its alternatives, then the smaller inland stops such as Gwytherin, Llangernyw, Llanefydd and Llanfairfechan. Once those pinch-points are secure, fill in the higher-capacity towns such as Holywell / Greenfield, St Asaph, Bangor and Llanberis.

Check meal availability as well as beds. Several rural pubs and small accommodations have limited opening patterns, and a room booking does not always guarantee an evening meal on the day needed.

For the optional Bardsey Island / Ynys Enlli leg, keep Aberdaron accommodation flexible if possible. The passenger boat from Porth Meudwy must be pre-booked and is weather- and tide-dependent, so a crossing is never guaranteed.

## Camping and Wild Camping

Camping is possible on the Pilgrim's Way to Bardsey Island, but it needs more planning than a typical campsite-to-campsite trail. The route is not a continuous wild-camping line: much of it crosses enclosed farmland, valley paths, woodland, low moorland and the settled Llŷn Peninsula (Penrhyn Llŷn), where legal camping normally means using a formal site or having landowner permission.

A tent-based crossing works best if you are willing to adjust stages around available campsites, book ahead and occasionally accept longer or shorter days. Several parts of the route have sizeable gaps between formal camping options, so do not assume that a campsite will appear at the end of each 14-day stage.

### Is this a good route for camping?

The North Wales Pilgrim's Way can be walked with a tent, but it is not primarily a camping route. It is better suited to walkers mixing campsites with B&Bs, hostels, bunkhouses or inns, especially through the northern farmland sections and around smaller inland villages where camping choices are limited.

The best camping stretch is the Llŷn Peninsula from Clynnog Fawr southwards, where there are more coastal campsites and several useful options near Trefor, Nefyn, Tudweiliog, Aberdaron and Porth Meudwy. This is also the section where a tent feels most natural, with exposed coast path walking and good end-of-route camping near the Bardsey Island / Ynys Enlli boat departure point.

The Carneddau / Eryri foothills around Rowen, Penmaenmawr and the Bwlch y Ddeufaen pass are the only part of the main route with a real upland feel. Even here, the pilgrim route does not climb onto the high Carneddau plateau and reaches only about 395 m, so do not plan on reliable, lawful wild-camping terrain directly on the waymarked line.

### Campsites on or near the route

The following sites are useful for route planning, moving roughly from north-east to south-west. Opening dates, pitch types, prices and walker availability change, so book ahead and confirm details before travelling, particularly in July and August.

Area / likely stage	Camping option	Practical notes
Trelawnyd / Waen area, early northern stages	Off-grid camping near Trelawnyd	Informal tent space in an orchard near the Trelawnyd / Waen area, with composting toilet and fresh water. Listed for pilgrims, but details can change.
The Waen / St Asaph area	Corn Bŵch Campsite, The Waen, St Asaph, LL17 0DY	Tents only. Small, basic site; phone ahead on 07919 433489 to check availability.
Rhuallt / Trelawnyd area	Penisar Mynydd Caravan Park, Caerwys Road, Rhuallt, St Asaph, LL17 0TY	About 2.5 miles south of Trelawnyd. Caravan park that also takes tents; check current availability for walkers. Phone 01745 582227.

Area / likely stage	Camping option	Practical notes
Rowen, Conwy Valley	Cefn Cae Campsite, Rowen	Family-run campsite in Rowen, useful before or after the Carneddau foothills section. Around 20 grass pitches for tents and touring units, electric hook-up available, with a pub within 200 yards and a post office/shop in the village.
Penmaenmawr	Tyddyn Du Touring Park, Conwy Old Road, Penmaenmawr, LL34 6RE	Adults-only site near Penmaenmawr, useful around the Rowen–Penmaenmawr–Abergwyngregyn part of the route.
Waunfawr	Parc Snowdonia Campsite	Near Waunfawr, between Llanberis and Penygroes, close to a key overnight stop on the route.
Pontllyfni / between Waunfawr and Clynnog Fawr	Ysgubor Wen Eco Camping, Pontllyfni, Caernarfon, LL54 5EU	Tents-only, adults-only off-grid eco site with 9 private pitches in wildflower meadow or woodland. Composting toilets, no showers, very basic; advance booking essential.
Clynnog Fawr	Henbant Permaculture Farm	Community-centred permaculture farm offering pilgrim accommodation and camping near Clynnog Fawr. Check current availability directly.
Trefor	Aberafon Camping Site	Campsite at or near Trefor on the Llŷn coast, useful between Clynnog Fawr and Nefyn.
Between Nefyn and Pistyll	Wern Campsite	Family-run seafront site between Nefyn and Pistyll. Well placed for the Nefyn–Pistyll–Tudweiliog coastal section. Phone 01758 720432.
Tudweiliog	Towyn Farm Campsite, Tudweiliog, LL53 8PD	At or near Tudweiliog on the north Llŷn coast. Useful before the Tudweiliog–Porth Oer–Aberdaron finale. Phone 01758 770600.
Tudweiliog	Penrallt Coastal Campsite, Penrallt, Tudweiliog, Pwllheli, LL53 8PB	Quiet eco-friendly site with direct access to the Heritage Coastal Path where it crosses the land. Offers Pilgrim Pods and Caravans as well as camping. Advance booking essential in peak season. Phone 01758 770654.
Aberdaron	Bwlchgwyn Campsite, Aberdaron, Pwllheli, LL53 8BY	Less than 1 mile from Aberdaron village centre. Toilets, free hot showers, electric hook-ups, dishwashing, water supply and recycling. Phone 07968 354539 or email <a href="mailto:enquiries@aberdaroncampsite.co.uk">enquiries@aberdaroncampsite.co.uk</a> .
Near Aberdaron / western tip of Llŷn	Mynydd Mawr Caravan and Camping Site	Coastal site overlooking Bardsey Island / Ynys Enlli. The Llŷn Peninsula Coastal Path passes the site; about 2 miles to Aberdaron. Tents, touring caravans and motorhomes, electric hook-ups, on-site café. Showers are coin-operated, £1 for 5 minutes. Phone 01758 760223 or 07989 716149.
Porth Meudwy / Aberdaron	Tir Glyn, Porth Meudwy	Very useful for walkers taking the optional Bardsey boat: the site is about 5 minutes' walk from Porth Meudwy cove and about 20 minutes' walk from Aberdaron. Working-farm campsite with toilets, hot showers, laundry, washing-up area and drinking water. Phone 01758 760248.

## Wild camping: law and practical reality

There is no general legal right to wild camp in Wales. Without the landowner's permission, wild camping is technically civil trespass, so the correct approach is to ask permission where land is enclosed, farmed or close to homes, livestock, roads or the coast path.

A Wild Camping (Wales) Bill is progressing through the Senedd as of 2026 and may change the legal position in future. This should be checked before travelling.

In Eryri / Snowdonia National Park, the official position is that wild camping is not permitted without prior permission from the landowner or farmer. In practice, discreet one-night camping is often tolerated on open, unenclosed mountain land above roughly 450–500 m where strict Leave No Trace principles are followed, but the main Pilgrim's Way stays below that height and does not summit Tal y Fan.

For this route, the practical answer is clear: do not rely on wild camping to complete the trail. The Flintshire, Denbighshire and Conwy sections are largely farmland, woodland and settled valley country, while the Llŷn Peninsula is mostly enclosed agricultural land within a National Landscape. Neither area offers the kind of open, high mountain ground where low-impact wild camping is normally tolerated.

## Where wild camping is least unsuitable

The only genuinely plausible area is the Carneddau foothills around Rowen, Penmaenmawr, the Druids' Circle and the Bwlch y Ddeufaen pass. Even there, use extreme discretion, stay away from farms and houses, and seek permission where possible.

The higher Carneddau plateau has better-known wild-camping terrain, but it lies off the direct pilgrim route. Diverting onto higher ground changes the walk, adds navigation responsibility and should only be considered by walkers equipped for exposed mountain weather.

The Llŷn Peninsula is not a realistic wild-camping landscape. Plan around formal campsites or arranged accommodation, especially between Nefyn, Pistyll, Tudweiliog, Porth Oer and Aberdaron.

## Leave No Trace and fire rules

Where a discreet upland camp is permitted or tolerated, follow the Eryri wild-camping code:

- Camp on open hill or fell land, well away from houses, farms and enclosed fields.
- Arrive late and leave early.
- Stay one night only in any location.
- Use a small, dark-coloured tent.
- Keep to one or two tents; this is not a route for group wild camps.
- Carry out every item of rubbish, including food waste and sanitary waste.
- Use a gas or liquid-fuel stove only, with the cooking area clear of vegetation.
- Do not light fires, disposable barbecues or fire pits in any wild or semi-wild place.
- Bury human waste at least 15 cm deep and at least 30 m from any water source or path.

Campfires should be treated as prohibited outside formal campsite arrangements. They damage thin mountain soils, peat, coastal grassland and farm margins, and are not appropriate anywhere along this

route. A small number of formal campsites may allow contained fires off the ground, such as Mynydd Mawr, but this must be agreed with the site before lighting anything.

## **Water for campers**

Formal campsites listed above have tap water from mains or borehole supplies. On a camping-based itinerary, fill up whenever water is available rather than assuming the next stage will have reliable natural sources.

In the Carneddau and moorland sections, streams are generally more available, but livestock grazing means water should be filtered or treated. Avoid taking water from slow, stagnant or heavily grazed areas.

On the Llŷn coast path, natural water sources become much less reliable. Carry enough water for exposed coastal stages and use villages, cafés where available, accommodation and campsite taps to refill.

## Food, Water and Resupply

Food planning on the North Wales Pilgrim's Way is straightforward in the larger towns, but it becomes a real logistical issue on the rural middle stages and the Llŷn Peninsula. Do not treat this as a route where food can be improvised day by day: several villages have a pub but no shop, cafés may keep limited daytime hours, and Sunday or winter closures can remove key options.

The most useful full resupply points are **Holywell / Treffynnon, St Asaph / Llanelwy, Llangernyw, Bangor, Llanberis, Penygroes, Clynnog Fawr, Nefyn / Morfa Nefyn and Aberdaron**. Bangor is the largest and most reliable stop on the route; Clynnog Fawr is the critical stock-up before the quieter Llŷn coast.

Accommodation often solves breakfast and evening meals, but only if arranged in advance. When booking beds, ask whether dinner is available, whether a packed lunch can be provided, and whether there is anywhere open nearby on the day of the week you arrive.

### How much food and water to carry

For the northern half, most walkers should carry a full day's snacks or lunch as a minimum, even when passing through villages with pubs or cafés. A normal water carry of **1–1.5 litres** is usually adequate where accommodation, pubs and cafés are expected, but increase this in warm weather.

Across the Carneddau / Eryri foothills and the more rural Conwy sections, carry **1.5–2 litres** and enough food to finish the day without relying on an unplanned café. Upland weather and slower going can make a short-looking day feel much longer.

From **Clynnog Fawr onwards on the Llŷn Peninsula**, carry **1–1.5 days of food** when leaving a known shop, especially if walking out of season or on a Sunday. On the remote northern coast between **Nefyn, Tudweiliog, Porth Oer and Aberdaron**, a minimum of **2 litres of water** is sensible, with more in hot or windy weather.

### Food availability by section

Section	Food availability	Water availability	Notes
Holywell / Treffynnon to Trelawnyd	Good at the start: Holywell has supermarkets, shops, cafés, pubs and fast food; Greenfield has shops and cafés; Holway has shops and a fish and chip shop. Gorsedd has a pub; Trelawnyd has a garage store and garden-centre café.	Tap water at accommodation and cafés; natural streams should be treated.	Stock up properly in Holywell before leaving the built-up start. Services become more intermittent after the early settlements.
Trelawnyd to St Asaph / Llanelwy	Moderate. The Salusbury Arms at Tremeirchion is a notable rural food stop; St Asaph has stores, pubs, cafés and fast food.	Tap water at accommodation and in town stops.	Jacob's Ladder café near St Asaph cathedral is closed at weekends, so do not rely on it without checking.

Section	Food availability	Water availability	Notes
St Asaph to Llanefydd	Limited. Llanefydd has the Hawk and Buckle pub, but there are limited other services.	Accommodation taps; natural water only if treated.	Book dinner or check pub meal times before arrival. This is a small-village stage, not a shop-to-shop walk.
Llanefydd to Gwytherin	Limited to moderate. Llansannan has a shop and post office and The Red Lion pub; Gwytherin has a pub but is a small village.	The River Cledwen and local streams should be filtered or chemically treated before drinking.	Carry a day's snacks and do not assume late-opening shops.
Gwytherin to Llangernyw	Limited. Pandy Tudur has no confirmed facilities; Llangernyw has a village shop/post office and The Old Stag pub.	Streams should be treated; refill at accommodation where possible.	Llangernyw is a key resupply point before the route becomes more rural again.
Llangernyw to Rowen / Ty'n-y-Groes	Moderate. Tal y Cafn has a pub and hotel; Rowen has the Ty Gwyn Hotel pub. Malwen Cafe in Rowen operates Thursday–Sunday, 10am–3pm.	Streams and accommodation taps; treat natural water.	Rowen currently has no regularly operating village shop. Do not rely on Malwen Cafe on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday.
Rowen to Abergwyngregyn	Good. Penmaenmawr and Llanfairfechan have shops, cafés and pubs; Abergwyngregyn has Caffi Hen Felin, Caffi Alma and Aber Falls Cafe & Butterfly Rooms.	Tap water in towns and cafés.	This is one of the better food stretches before the route turns towards Bangor and inland Gwynedd. Check seasonal hours at Aber Falls Cafe.
Abergwyngregyn to Bangor	Good. Bangor has numerous pubs, shops, cafés and supermarkets.	Full tap-water access in the city.	Bangor is the best full resupply point on the route and the place to buy anything needed for the western half.
Bangor to Llanberis	Good. Llanberis has pubs, cafés and shops.	Tap water in settlements and accommodation. Do not drink untreated open water.	Llanberis is a tourist town, so services are good, but some opening hours may be seasonal.
Llanberis to Clynog Fawr	Moderate. Waunfawr and Penygroes have pubs, cafés and shops; Pant Du café near Penygroes is April–October, 10:30–16:30. Clynog Fawr has a village shop, petrol station and pub.	Refill in villages and accommodation.	Clynog Fawr is the key stock-up before the more remote Llŷn coast. Treat it as the last reliable shop before Nefyn / Morfa Nefyn.
Clynog Fawr to Nefyn	Limited. Trefor has a village shop; Caffi Meinir at Nant Gwrtheyrn is an accessible off-route café; Nefyn has shops, cafés, pubs and a supermarket on the High Street.	Limited natural sources; use accommodation taps and treat any stream water.	Do not assume every coastal village has a shop. Traffic bypassing the villages has reduced passing trade and services can be sparse.

Section	Food availability	Water availability	Notes
Nefyn to Tudweiliog	Moderate at the ends. Nefyn and Morfa Nefyn have shops and eateries; Morfa Nefyn has a small supermarket and post office. Tŷ Coch Inn at Porthdinllaen is a worthwhile foot-access diversion; Tudweiliog has the Lion Hotel and a post office.	Accommodation taps are the reliable option; no dependable wild source should be assumed.	Tŷ Coch is reached only on foot, with beach access affected by tide state; use the golf-course route at high tide. The Lion Hotel is a key food stop on this remote coast.
Tudweiliog to Aberdaron	Very limited. Porth Oer / Whistling Sands has a seasonal café/kiosk only; Aberdaron has a Spar, Becws Islyn bakery, pubs, cafés and eateries.	No reliable source should be assumed between stops; carry from Tudweiliog.	This is the most important food-and-water carry: take a full day's food and at least 2 litres of water. Porth Oer refreshments are seasonal, roughly Easter–October.
Aberdaron and optional Porth Meudwy / Bardsey Island crossing	Good in Aberdaron: Spar, Becws Islyn bakery, pubs, cafés and Y Gegin Fawr. No shops or cafés at Porth Meudwy. Bardsey Island / Ynys Enlli has very limited visitor facilities.	Refill fully in Aberdaron before walking to Porth Meudwy.	Stock up before the optional boat. Day-trippers should not assume food is available on Bardsey; check the Bardsey Island Trust visitor information before travelling.

## Key resupply points

**Holywell / Treffynnon** is the best place to start with a full food bag. The town has supermarkets and a broad choice of shops and places to eat, while Greenfield and Holway add further early options close to the route.

**St Asaph / Llanelwy** is the main early-route resupply. It has stores, cafés, pubs and fast food, making it a useful place to reset before the smaller Denbighshire and Conwy villages.

**Llangernyw** is important because it combines a village shop/post office with a pub. This is a sensible place to buy lunch supplies before heading towards Eglwysbach, Tal y Cafn and Rowen.

**Bangor** is the strongest resupply point on the entire walk. Use it for supermarket food, toiletries, batteries, gas or equipment needs before moving into the more rural Gwynedd and Llŷn stages.

**Clynnog Fawr** deserves special attention. The village shop and petrol station near St Beuno's Church are the last reliable stock-up before the quieter coastal stretch towards Trefor, Nefyn and Morfa Nefyn; walkers should leave with enough food for up to two days if onward options are uncertain.

**Nefyn and Morfa Nefyn** are the main resupply points on the northern Llŷn coast. Nefyn has a supermarket on the High Street, while Morfa Nefyn has a well-stocked small supermarket and post office on Lon Terfyn.

**Aberdaron** is the final full-service village. Stock up here before walking to Porth Meudwy for the optional Bardsey Island / Ynys Enlli boat, as there are no shops or cafés at the departure cove.

## **Pubs, cafés and seasonal hours**

Rural North Wales pubs often have split service, with food around lunchtime and again in the evening rather than all day. In small villages, kitchen hours may be reduced midweek, and some pubs or cafés may close entirely on quiet days; booking or checking ahead is part of the route planning.

Specific opening cautions matter on this route. Jacob's Ladder café in St Asaph is closed at weekends; Malwen Cafe in Rowen is open Thursday–Sunday, 10am–3pm; Pant Du café near Penygroes is April–October, 10:30–16:30; and the Porth Oer / Whistling Sands kiosk is seasonal, broadly Easter–October.

Caffi Meinir at Nant Gwrtheyrn is a useful café for walkers approaching Llithfaen, but it is linked to the Welsh Language and Heritage Centre, so opening hours should be checked before detouring. The Tŷ Coch Inn at Porthdinllaen is a memorable Llŷn food stop, but it requires a small diversion and foot access; beach access depends on the tide state.

## **Water refills and natural water**

The safest water strategy is to refill at accommodation each morning and ask for top-ups at pubs, cafés and shops during the day. Many churches along the route have outdoor taps, and church halls sometimes leave taps accessible, but access is not guaranteed and should not be the sole plan for a stage.

Holy wells on the route, including St Winefride's Well at Holywell and St Beuno's Well at Clynnog Fawr, are historic and spiritual landmarks rather than dependable treated drinking-water supplies. Do not assume water from a holy well is safe to drink unless it is clearly provided as potable water.

The route crosses many streams and rivers, including watercourses around the Carneddau foothills and the River Cledwen near Gwytherin. Because sheep and cattle are common across the route, all natural water should be treated as potentially contaminated and filtered or chemically treated before drinking.

On the exposed Llŷn clifftop sections, natural water is less useful and less predictable. Between Tudweiliog, Porth Oer and Aberdaron, leave the morning stop with enough water to finish the day without needing a refill.

## Navigation and Waymarking

The North Wales Pilgrim's Way is a waymarked route, but it is not a trail to follow on signs alone. Treat the roundels as reassurance, and carry a downloaded GPX or the official section maps as the primary line to check against.

The route is marked east to west from Holywell / Treffynnon to Aberdaron. Walking it in reverse is significantly harder because the waymarking is directional and is not designed to guide west-to-east walkers.

### Waymarks on the ground

The trail uses distinctive circular waymarker discs carrying the North Wales Pilgrim's Way / Taith Pererin Gogledd Cymru branding. These appear through the route and are the main in-field marker to look for at junctions, field exits, lanes and church approaches.

In settled and better-used sections the route is generally straightforward to follow, with roundels visible along the way. In quieter countryside, signs may be less obvious, faded, overgrown or set back from the natural walking line, so pause at unclear junctions rather than pressing on and hoping the next marker appears.

The official route is divided into 25 numbered sections. Each has a free PDF route description and interactive OS mapping on the official North Wales Pilgrim's Way website, which is one of the most useful planning tools for matching daily accommodation stops to the actual waymarked line.

### GPX and digital mapping

A GPX file is strongly recommended. The route crosses farmland, woodland, rough moorland, villages, lanes and coast path, and even a well-waymarked long-distance path can be awkward when a sign is missed or a field path is not well trodden.

The British Pilgrimage Trust provides a free GPX for the North Wales Pilgrim's Way. The LDWA also lists route files, while the official website links each numbered section to interactive OS mapping.

Useful digital options include OS Maps and other GPS mapping apps that can import a GPX, such as Outdooractive, komoot, AllTrails, Gaia GPS, Memory Map, Guru Maps, Hiking Project and Outdoor GPS. Download the route and base mapping for offline use before each day, especially before the Carneddau foothills and the more remote Llŷn Peninsula stages.

Do not assume that every digital line will be identical. Some tracks include detours or alternative lines, and OS mapping has been noted as differing from the waymarked route in at least one section near Bangor. Where the GPX, map and signs disagree, slow down and check the official section notes before committing.

### Paper maps

Paper mapping is sensible as a backup, particularly for the open upland and coastal sections, but carrying every 1:25,000 sheet for the full trail is bulky. Through-walkers will usually find an offline digital

OS map plus GPX more practical, with paper maps used selectively for the more complex or exposed days.

Map series	Sheets covering the route
OS Landranger 1:50,000	114, 115, 116, 123
OS Explorer 1:25,000	OL17, 253, 254, 263, 264, 265, 266

The Explorer coverage gives the most detail for field boundaries, rights of way and moorland paths, but seven sheets are needed for the complete route. A digital OS Maps subscription or downloaded offline mapping is therefore the more efficient option for most end-to-end walkers.

## Sections needing extra care

The most important navigation challenge is the Carneddau foothills around Rowen, Penmaenmawr, the Druids' Circle area and Bwlch y Ddeufaen below Tal y Fan. This is open, exposed country where paths can be indistinct or intermittent over rough moorland, and poor visibility can make junctions and contouring lines harder to read.

Woodland gorge sections around the Conwy valley also need care underfoot, especially after rain when paths can be slippery. Field and farm sections elsewhere can be wet, muddy and less clearly walked, so expect occasional slow progress while locating stiles, gates and roundels.

On the Llŷn Peninsula the route benefits from coast path signing in places, but cliff paths can be affected by erosion. Diversions have been in place around the Nefyn area, including between Nefyn and Porth Oer / Whistling Sands and between Nefyn and Morfa Nefyn due to landslips; check the official route updates before walking these stages.

## Mobile signal and offline preparation

Mobile coverage should not be relied on for live navigation. The Llŷn Peninsula is rural and remote, with patchy coverage beyond Nefyn and Aberdaron, especially in valleys and on some clifftop sections.

The Carneddau moorland crossing near Bwlch y Ddeufaen is another area where limited coverage is possible. Download GPX files, route PDFs and offline maps in advance, and keep enough battery for a full day of GPS checks.

A power bank is a practical item on this route, particularly if using a phone for navigation over consecutive long days. Keep one offline backup that does not depend on a data connection, whether that is a second device, printed route notes or relevant paper mapping.

## Guidebooks, route cards and pilgrim information

The official guidebooks are designed for east-to-west travel and are a useful companion to the waymarks. Current official titles include the full-route guide, *North Wales Pilgrim's Way: The Official Guide to the Welsh Camino* by Chris Potter, plus the updated section guides *Holywell to Rowen* and *Rowen to Aberdaron*.

The older *Pilgrim's Way / Taith Pererin* by Mike Stevens is also relevant, but current route PDFs and diversion notes should take priority where lines have changed. This should be checked before travelling.

The Pilgrim Passport, church stamps, visitor books and QR codes along the route are part of the pilgrimage experience rather than a navigation system. QR information is useful where signal allows, but it should not replace route notes or offline mapping.

### **Suitability for less-experienced navigators**

Confident beginners can complete the route if they are comfortable using a GPX, reading simple route notes and checking their position when signs become unclear. The route does not require technical mountain navigation, scrambling or off-path route-finding, but it does require more judgement than a fully signed urban trail.

Waymarks alone are not enough for a safe two-week crossing of North Wales. The best approach is to walk the conventional east-to-west direction, carry the official section notes, load the GPX onto an offline mapping app, and pay particular attention on the Carneddau moorland and the exposed Llŷn coastal stages.

# Terrain, Conditions and Difficulty in Practice

The North Wales Pilgrim's Way is moderate in technical terms, but it is not a gentle lowland stroll. Its difficulty comes from repeated 16–19 km days on mixed surfaces, frequent stiles, wet farm paths, exposed upland and coastal sections, and around 6,035 m of total ascent on the LDWA route record.

There is no scrambling and no peak-bagging terrain. The route's high ground is the open Carneddau foothill plateau around Bwlch y Ddeufaen, below Tal y Fan, rather than the 610 m summit itself.

## Underfoot: what the walking is actually like

Expect a constant change of surface rather than one dominant path type. The route uses field paths, woodland tracks, riverside paths, green lanes, old drove roads, farm and forestry tracks, quiet lanes, moorland paths, rough coastal paths and some rocky ground.

Tarmac appears regularly, usually on quiet lanes or short connecting sections. There are also busier road encounters, including a very busy road crossing at St Asaph / Llanellwyr and a cycleway section beside the A499 near Clynnog Fawr.

The hardest underfoot sections are not technically difficult, but they can be slow. Mud, wet grass, slippery woodland climbs, boggy moorland, ladder stiles and rough clifftop paths all add time, especially with a full pack.

## Terrain by section

Route area	Typical terrain	What makes it harder
Holywell / Treffynnon to St Asaph / Llanellwyr	Pastoral field paths, hillside walking, woodland, bridleways, meadows, green lanes, quiet lanes, some quarry and airfield navigation	Frequent stiles, muddy field paths, road crossings, and sections where the line through farmland needs attention
St Asaph / Llanellwyr to Rowen	Woods, farmland, enclosed tracks, hillside, gorse, woodland gorges, riverside paths and open moorland	Wet rough country, stream fords, slippery climbs and descents, overgrown or faint paths, many ladder stiles
Rowen to Abergwyngregyn	The highest and most open part of the route: Coffin Path, open moorland, stream fords, Bwlch y Ddeufaen, forest track, open hillside	Sustained ascent, exposure to wind, rain and mist, boggy ground after wet weather, and limited shelter on the plateau
Abergwyngregyn to Clynnog Fawr	Eryri / Snowdonia fringe, moorland, forest, farmland, quarry landscapes, riverside paths, old railway track and urban edges near Bangor	Mixed navigation, steep descent and climbing after the old quarry railway section, fords, gates, and rougher moorland crossings
Clynnog Fawr to Aberdaron	Llyn Peninsula coast path, clifftop paths, beach or cliff alternatives, inland links, hedgerows, fields and short steep coastal climbs	Wind exposure, rough narrow paths, steep descents and re-ascents, slippery ground after rain, landslip diversions and undercut cliff-edge sections

## **Mud, wet ground and stream crossings**

Mud is a real planning factor on this route. The farmed sections in Flintshire, Denbighshire and Conwy can be very muddy in autumn, winter and spring, and damp patches can remain even after dry weather.

The section from Maen Achwyfan towards Llanasa includes a footpath that can become extremely muddy, with an alternative line used to bypass the worst of it. In the Conwy middle section, rough country between Llanefydd, Llansannan, Gwytherin and Pandy Tudur can be extremely wet in places.

Several sections include stream crossings. Many are bridged, but some are fords; these are not normally technical crossings, but they can be higher and more awkward after heavy rain.

The moorland around Bwlch y Ddeufaen can also be wet and boggy. Good waterproof boots with reliable grip are strongly preferable to lightweight trail shoes for most walkers carrying overnight kit.

## **Climbs, descents and exposure**

The route never reaches alpine or scrambling terrain, but it contains repeated climbs and descents. These are spread across the whole walk, so tired legs and wet ground often matter more than the absolute height of any one hill.

The main upland test is the Rowen to Abergwyngregyn area. The route climbs from the Conwy side onto open moorland, passes through the prehistoric landscape around the Druids' Circle / Penmaenmawr stone circles, and crosses the Bwlch y Ddeufaen area below Tal y Fan.

This section is the most remote-feeling part of the route. In low cloud or mist, navigation becomes more serious, and there is little shelter from wind and rain on the open ground.

The Llŷn Peninsula gives a different kind of difficulty. The walking is generally lower, but the coast path is exposed, frequently windy, and includes rough tracks plus short, steep ascents and descents around coves, streams and headlands.

## **Cliffs, coast path hazards and landslips**

The Llŷn coast is the most dramatic but also the most condition-sensitive walking on the route. Paths can be narrow, rough, slippery after rain and exposed to strong wind.

Near Penrhyn Melyn, the path is undercut and in danger of crumbling, so extra care is needed and the cliff edge should be given a wide berth. There are also landslip diversions between Nefyn and Porth Oer, and the current route line should be checked before travelling.

Some sections offer beach or cliff-top options. The beach alternative near Clynnog Fawr to Trefor is only suitable at low tide, so do not plan on using it without checking conditions and timings.

## **Stiles, gates and field walking**

Stiles are one of the defining practical features of the North Wales Pilgrim's Way. The official route notes make clear that stile replacement with gates is ongoing, but walkers should still expect to cross many stiles.

Ladder stiles are especially common through the Conwy valley and farmland sections, and at least one steep ladder stile is encountered near the Rowen upland approach. These slow progress, particularly in

wet weather or with a heavy rucksack.

On the Llŷn Peninsula, kissing gates and field gates become more common, but this does not remove the need for careful navigation. In field systems, the correct exit gate is not always obvious from the entry point.

## **Navigation difficulty**

The route is waymarked, but it should not be treated as a route that can be followed by waymarks alone. Some middle sections have little-used or overgrown paths, and parts of the Conwy moorland and valley stages require careful map or GPX work.

The section from Llansannan to Gwytherin includes places where North Wales Pilgrim's Way markers are not always present. Around Llanberis to Waunfawr, Dragonfly waymarks are used on small-field sections rather than the standard NWPW roundels.

Urban and edge-of-town navigation also occurs, particularly around Bangor, where the route passes through railway and industrial-park surroundings. These sections are not physically hard, but they are easy places to lose rhythm or miss a turn.

## **Seasonal conditions**

Spring can bring wet field paths, soft moorland and fast-changing upland weather. It is a good walking season, but waterproofs and warm layers are still essential.

Summer usually gives the longest daylight and the best chance of firm ground, but some paths may be faint or overgrown. Exposed coastal sections can still be windy and wet.

Autumn can be excellent for visibility and quieter walking, but mud increases quickly after sustained rain. Woodland descents, stream crossings and farm paths become noticeably slower.

Winter is outside the route's usual recommended season for most walkers. Short daylight, mud, wind, rain and exposed upland or coastal sections make the route much harder, even though the heights are modest.

## **What makes the route easier or harder in practice**

The route feels easier when accommodation stops keep daily distances moderate, when the ground is dry, and when the upland and coastal days are walked in settled weather. It also becomes more manageable with luggage transfer, because stiles, mud and repeated climbs are less tiring without a full pack.

It feels harder when wet weather turns field paths and moorland into slow going, when wind affects the Llŷn coast, or when mist reduces visibility around the Carneddau foothills. The cumulative nature of the walk matters: a muddy 17 km day late in the route can feel much tougher than the same distance at the start.

For most walkers, the correct preparation is not technical mountaineering kit, but reliable hillwalking basics: waterproof boots, full waterproofs, warm layers, a map or GPX backup, and enough fitness for two continuous weeks of rough, mixed-ground walking.

# Weather and Best Time to Walk

The best walking window for the Pilgrim's Way to Bardsey Island is **May to September**, with **May-June** the strongest choice for most walkers. This gives long daylight, generally firmer ground, better accommodation availability, and the best chance of combining the walk with the optional Bardsey Island / Ynys Enlli boat.

The route crosses two different weather zones. The inland stages through Flintshire, Denbighshire and Conwy can be muddy after rain but are less exposed than the coast; the later Llŷn Peninsula stages are more maritime, windier and fully open to Atlantic weather systems. Plan for waterproofs and wind protection even in summer.

## Best months at a glance

Period	Verdict	What to expect
<b>May-June</b>	<b>Best overall</b>	Long days, relatively low rainfall, good walking temperatures and spring growth on the coast. May is often the driest and sunniest practical month, with Aberdaron averaging about 76 mm of rain.
<b>July-August</b>	<b>Good, but busier</b>	Warmest period, very long daylight and generally firm paths. Accommodation pressure is higher in the school holidays, and exposed Llŷn coast sections can feel hot if there is little shade.
<b>September</b>	<b>Good alternative</b>	Still mild, fewer visitors after the school holidays and strong wildlife interest around Bardsey. Days shorten noticeably and early Atlantic storms become more likely.
<b>October-November</b>	<b>Poor for a full thru-hike</b>	Wetter, windier and harder logistically. November is the wettest month at Aberdaron, around 183 mm, and some rural accommodation reduces availability after October half-term.
<b>December-February</b>	<b>Not practical for most walkers</b>	Short daylight, muddy fields, cold upland crossings and limited accommodation. The Bardsey crossing cannot be treated as a reliable planned finish.
<b>March-April</b>	<b>Possible, but variable</b>	Improving daylight, but field paths can still be at their worst after winter. Early-season accommodation and boat availability should be checked before travelling.

## May and June: the sweet spot

May and June suit the route particularly well because the daily stages are long enough to benefit from extended daylight. By late May, North Wales has roughly a 5:30am sunrise and a 9pm sunset, giving generous time for navigation, café stops, church visits and delays on muddy field paths.

Ground conditions are usually better than in winter or late autumn, though prolonged rain can still make the inland field sections heavy going. Boots remain the sensible default; trail shoes are only suitable for walkers comfortable with wet grass, mud and rougher farm tracks.

The annual communal pilgrimage walk takes place in May, so some stages may coincide with organised groups. That can add atmosphere, but accommodation should still be booked well ahead in the smaller overnight stops.

## **July and August: warmest, longest and busiest**

July and August bring the warmest conditions, with the coast around Aberdaron typically reaching about 17–18°C by day. These are not extreme temperatures, but the Llŷn coast path has long exposed stretches where shade and water can be limited.

Carry enough water for the coastal days, especially from Clynog Fawr onwards through Trefor, Nefyn, Tudweiliog, Porth Oer and Aberdaron. Do not rely on finding streams on the cliff sections.

This is also peak holiday season. Accommodation on the Llŷn Peninsula is limited and popular, so daily stages may be dictated by where beds are available rather than by ideal mileage.

## **September: quieter and still workable**

September is a strong choice if accommodation pressure is a concern. Temperatures on the coast are usually still pleasant, around 15–17°C, and the route is quieter after the school holidays.

The trade-off is daylight and weather reliability. By late September, sunset is around 7:30pm, so starts need to be earlier and delays matter more. Atlantic low pressure systems can also begin to affect the Llŷn, with stronger winds and a greater chance of disruption to the Bardsey boat.

September can be especially worthwhile if the optional island crossing is part of the plan, as Bardsey has seasonal wildlife interest including Manx shearwaters still present and grey seals beginning to pup. The crossing still depends entirely on sea and wind conditions.

## **Autumn and winter**

October and November are not recommended for a full end-to-end walk unless the party is experienced, flexible and prepared for cancellations. The Llŷn coast is exposed to prevailing south-westerly winds, and October into December is the wettest period of the year on the peninsula.

By October, usable walking daylight is much more limited. A standard 16–19 km stage can still be done, but navigation errors, heavy mud, café closures or accommodation transfers become harder to absorb before dark.

Winter is generally impractical for this route as a continuous pilgrimage. Short days, muddy fields, cold wind on the Carneddau foothills, reduced rural accommodation and unreliable boat availability make it a poor season for most walkers.

## **Wind, rain and exposed sections**

The two places where weather matters most are the **Carneddau foothills** and the **Llŷn coast**.

The crossing near the ancient Bwlch y Ddeufaen pass below Tal y Fan reaches the route's highest ground, around 395 m. This is not a mountain summit, but it is open moorland and can feel severe in poor weather. Wind on the tops can be far stronger than in the valleys, with wind chill well below the forecast air temperature.

Check the MWIS forecast for Eryri / Snowdonia before the Rowen, Penmaenmawr and Abergwyngregyn area stages. Full waterproofs, warm layers and a proper wind layer should be carried even if the valley forecast looks mild.

On the Llŷn Peninsula, the coast path is exposed to the Irish Sea and Atlantic weather. Strong south-westerlies can make clifftop walking tiring, and wet short grass can become slippery. Check the forecast for Aberdaron specifically rather than relying on a general North Wales forecast.

## Trail surface by season

The inland stages through Denbighshire and Conwy use field paths, woodland, farm tracks and lanes. After prolonged rain these can become very muddy, particularly in spring and autumn.

The moorland near the Carneddau foothills can be boggy at any time of year. Gaiters are useful outside the driest summer periods.

The Llŷn coast path generally drains better, but exposure is the issue. In rain and wind, grassy clifftop sections can be slippery, and progress may be slower than the mileage suggests.

## Daylight and daily stage planning

The standard itinerary uses repeated 16–19 km days, so daylight is an important planning factor. Long summer days make the route much easier to manage, especially when accommodation is not directly on the trail.

Month	Approximate daylight implication for walkers
June	Longest days, with sunrise around 4:50am and sunset around 9:35pm. Excellent for relaxed pacing and contingency time.
July	Still very long days, with sunset around 9pm.
August	Comfortable daylight, though sunset is around 8:30pm by the end of the month.
September	Workable with early starts; sunset is around 7:30pm by late month.
October	Much tighter. Sunset around 6pm makes delays and long diversions more serious.
December–January	Around 8 hours of potential daylight, with much less usable time in poor weather. Not suited to a relaxed end-to-end walk.

## Bardsey Island boat weather

The optional final leg from Porth Meudwy to Bardsey Island / Ynys Enlli is **not guaranteed**. It must be pre-booked and depends on tide, sea state and wind.

The boat normally operates broadly from April to October, on days when weather and demand allow. It does not run in rough seas or when winds are too strong; wind speeds above roughly 20–25 mph can stop crossings.

If Bardsey is important to the trip, build in flexibility at Aberdaron. Arriving a night early and allowing a spare day gives a better chance if the first sailing is cancelled, but even then the crossing may not

happen. Current sailing arrangements, booking details and seasonal operation should be checked before travelling.

## **Insects and ticks**

Midges are not usually a major planning issue on this route. They can be annoying on still, humid summer evenings in wooded valleys, but they are not comparable to the worst Highland midge areas.

Ticks are a more practical concern. They are present in bracken, long grass, moorland and rough grazing, especially on inland and Carneddau foothill sections. Carry a tick remover and check skin and clothing after each day in rough vegetation.

## Safety Notes

This is a moderate long-distance walk rather than a technical mountain route, but it crosses exposed upland, wet farmland, remote moorland and serious Llŷn Peninsula cliff paths. Treat it as a sustained two-week outdoor journey, not a series of short village strolls.

### Emergency help

In the UK, call **999** or **112** in an emergency. For mountain rescue, call **999**, ask for **Police**, then ask for **Mountain Rescue**.

The Carneddau and surrounding Eryri / Snowdonia area are covered by Ogwen Valley Mountain Rescue Organisation, but all mountain rescue callouts are requested through the 999 Police route. Give your location as clearly as possible: grid reference, nearby village, named pass, church, road crossing, coast path feature or what3words if available.

### Mobile signal and navigation

Do not rely on mobile signal on this route. Coverage can be unreliable through the rural inland sections of Flintshire, Denbighshire and the Conwy valley, on the moorland around Llansannan and Gwytherin, and across the Carneddau foothills around Rowen, the Druids' Circle and Bwlch y Ddeufaen.

The Llŷn Peninsula has improving 4G coverage in settlements such as Nefyn and Aberdaron, but signal can still be patchy between headlands and on clifftop sections. Download maps and GPX files for offline use before setting off, and carry a paper map or printed route notes as backup.

Waymarking helps, but it is not a substitute for navigation. Mist, poor visibility, missing signs, field-edge detours and path closures can all make a waymarked trail harder to follow than expected.

### The Carneddau foothills: stages 6–7

The most exposed inland section is the crossing through the Carneddau foothills behind Rowen and Penmaenmawr, via the Druids' Circle plateau and Bwlch y Ddeufaen. The route reaches its approximate high point here, around 395 m, but the risk comes from exposure and remoteness rather than altitude.

This is open mountain country with wet ground, indistinct paths in places and fast-changing weather. Low cloud and mist can make navigation difficult, and walkers may be far from help for several hours.

Check the Met Office mountain forecast for Eryri / Snowdonia before this section. Do not start it in trainers or without waterproofs, warm layers, food, water and a reliable navigation plan. If cloud drops, wind strengthens or progress becomes uncertain, turning back or taking a lower escape option is safer than pressing on.

### Llŷn Peninsula cliffs: stages 12–14

The later Llŷn stages include exposed clifftop coast path, especially beyond Clynnog Fawr, Trefor, Nefyn, Pistyll, Tudweiliog, Porth Oer / Whistling Sands and towards Aberdaron. These sections have serious drop hazards and can be much more demanding in wind, rain, sea mist or poor visibility.

Stay well back from cliff edges, particularly in gusty weather. Wet grass, mud and narrow trods can be slippery, and some stretches are no more than a sheep track.

Take particular care above the inlet at Penrhyn Melyn near the Porth Oer / Whistling Sands area, where the path is undercut and can be slippery when wet. The route notes for this part also include sections where scrambling up cliffs may be necessary, so allow extra time and avoid pushing on in bad conditions.

Recent landslips between Nefyn and Porth Oer have required diversions. Check for current path closures before walking the Llŷn coastal stages, using the official North Wales Pilgrim's Way information or Natural Resources Wales updates.

## **Weather, heat and cold**

North Wales weather changes quickly year-round. The Carneddau foothills and the Llŷn clifftops are both exposed to strong Atlantic weather, while inland field paths can become very muddy after rain.

Carry waterproofs and an insulating layer even in summer. Wind and rain can chill walkers quickly on open ground, especially late in the day or when moving slowly over wet, rough terrain.

In warm weather, the exposed Llŷn coast and open farmland can still be tiring. Carry enough water for the day, use sun protection, and do not assume there will be frequent shops or cafés between overnight stops.

Sea mist on the Llŷn coast is a specific navigation hazard. If visibility drops near cliffs, slow down, move inland where possible, and avoid walking close to edges.

## **Mud, livestock and farmland**

Several inland sections cross working agricultural land with livestock, stiles, kissing gates, farm access tracks and poorly drained paths. Mud, wet grass and slippery field edges are normal after rain.

The Llanasa to Trelawnyd area can be extremely muddy, and the Llangernyw section can be muddy, wet and slippery. Waterproof boots with good tread are strongly recommended for the full route, not just the upland days.

Follow the Countryside Code: leave gates as found, keep dogs under close control, give cattle a wide berth and do not get between cows and calves. In sheep country, dogs should be on a lead whenever livestock are nearby.

## **Road walking and crossings**

Most of the route uses paths, lanes and tracks, but there are a few important road-safety points. An early inland section includes walking beside a very busy road, and the route also crosses a modern bridge over the A55 North Wales Expressway.

Near Bangor, the route crosses the A5. Use the waymarked crossing points, do not improvise shortcuts, and take extra care if visibility is poor or traffic is fast.

On quiet lanes, walk facing oncoming traffic where there is no pavement, use a torch or headtorch in low light, and wear something visible in poor weather.

## Water and the Bardsey crossing

There are riverside and valley sections on the route, but no routine river-ford problem is highlighted for the main trail. The main water-related risks are slippery wet paths, clifftop inlets, the area around waterfalls and the optional boat crossing to Bardsey Island / Ynys Enlli.

The Bardsey boat from Porth Meudwy is optional, pre-booked, and entirely dependent on tide and weather. Bardsey Sound has strong tides and rough-water hazards, and sailings can be cancelled at short notice.

Do not book non-refundable onward travel from Aberdaron on the same day as a planned Bardsey trip. If crossing that day, call **07971 769 895** and listen to the recorded message after **18:30** the previous evening for the sailing status. This should be checked before travelling.

## Solo hiking

Solo walkers can complete the route safely with normal long-distance-walking precautions, but some sections are isolated. The Carneddau foothills, the moorland between Llansannan and Gwytherin, and the exposed Llŷn cliff stages may involve hours without seeing another person.

Leave a route plan, accommodation list and expected finish time with someone not on the walk. Check in when possible, and make sure that person knows what to do if contact is missed.

Self-guided package operators can provide useful logistical support, especially where accommodation and transfers are involved, but they are not a substitute for carrying the right kit and making safe decisions on the hill or coast.

## Check before setting off each day

Before leaving each morning, check:

- the weather forecast, and the Met Office mountain forecast for Eryri / Snowdonia before the Carneddau section;
- current path closures or diversions on the North Wales Pilgrim's Way, especially on the Llŷn coast;
- the Bardsey boat recorded message if attempting the Ynys Enlli crossing;
- that the day's route, GPX and offline maps are available on your phone;
- that battery power is sufficient, with a power bank for longer days;
- water and food for the full stage, allowing for limited services between villages;
- your accommodation ETA, particularly where staying at small guesthouses or remote stops.

Some signs and local place names are in Welsh, and many places are commonly referred to by both Welsh and English names. Emergency services in Wales operate in English, with Welsh-language services also available; a 999 response is not delayed by language.

## Gear Recommendations

Gear choices for the Pilgrim's Way to Bardsey Island should be driven by wet ground, exposed upland and coastal weather, and the cumulative effect of two weeks of 16–19 km walking days. This is not a technical mountain route, but lightweight fair-weather kit is a poor match for North Wales in spring, summer or autumn.

### Footwear

Waterproof walking boots with good ankle support are the safest default for the full route. The early inland stages include farm fields, stiles, mud, wet grass and lanes; the middle of the route crosses open Carneddau foothills; and the Llŷn Peninsula adds rocky and exposed coast path.

A waterproof membrane such as Gore-Tex or equivalent is strongly recommended. Wet underfoot conditions are common after rain, and 14 days in damp footwear is one of the quickest ways to develop blisters.

Avoid using trail running shoes for the full route unless highly experienced and walking in a dry spell. They may be comfortable on lanes and firm tracks, but the combination of muddy fields, bracken-lined paths, rocky ground and loaded daily mileage favours sturdier footwear.

Low gaiters are worth carrying. They help keep wet grass, mud and debris out of boots, and are particularly useful on inland field sections, the Carneddau foothills and bracken or heathland where ticks may be present.

Boots should be fully broken in before the first day from Holywell / Treffynnon. A spare pair of light shoes or sandals for evenings is useful for inn-to-inn walkers, especially after days spent in wet boots.

### Waterproofs and weather protection

A breathable waterproof jacket is non-negotiable on this route at any time of year. Waterproof trousers should also be carried, not left in the overnight bag, because rain and wind can combine quickly on the Carneddau foothills and the Llŷn coast.

Use a rucksack liner or dry bags inside the pack, even when using luggage transfer. A pack cover helps, but it is not enough on its own in sustained Welsh rain.

Keep waterproofs near the top of the daypack rather than buried under food and spare clothing. The exposed ground around the Bwlch y Ddeufaen area and the clifftop approach towards Aberdaron give little shelter once weather arrives.

### Layers for North Wales conditions

Use a moisture-wicking synthetic or merino base layer; avoid cotton next to the skin. Quick-drying walking trousers or softshell trousers are far better than denim, which becomes cold, heavy and slow to dry.

Carry a fleece or lightweight insulated layer every day, including in summer. Mornings, evenings, the Carneddau foothills and the Llŷn clifftops can feel much colder than sheltered valleys.

A warm hat, gloves and a buff or neck gaiter are sensible for the whole route. A sun hat or cap is also useful on the Llŷn Peninsula, where summer cliff paths can be exposed with little shade.

## Navigation kit

The route is waymarked with official discs across 25 numbered sections, but signage should not be treated as a complete navigation system. Waymarks can be more spaced out between villages, and mist can reduce visibility quickly on open ground.

Load a GPX track onto an offline-capable mapping app before starting. OS Maps, Komoot or Gaia GPS are all suitable if the maps and route are downloaded for offline use.

Carry paper mapping as a backup, especially for the Carneddau foothills and more remote Llŷn stages. Relevant OS Explorer sheets are:

OS Explorer sheet	Useful coverage
265	Clwyd area and northern stages
264	Vale of Clwyd
263	Denbigh and Colwyn Bay area
17	Snowdonia West / Eryri western stages
254	Llŷn Peninsula East
253	Llŷn Peninsula West, including Aberdaron

A compass is worthwhile rather than optional. It is most relevant on the open upland crossing behind Penmaenmawr and Rowen, where mist and poor weather can make the route feel more serious than its altitude suggests.

## Pack size and carrying style

Most walkers on this route use accommodation and luggage transfer, but the daypack still needs to carry full bad-weather and safety kit. Do not send all warm clothing, waterproof trousers or navigation backups in the transferred bag.

Walking style	Recommended pack	What it needs to carry
Inn-to-inn with luggage transfer	25–35 litres	Waterproofs, warm layer, water, lunch, snacks, first aid, navigation, power bank, spare dry layer
Inn-to-inn self-carrying	50–65 litres	All clothing and overnight kit, plus daily food, water and weather protection
Camping	65–80 litres	Shelter, sleeping system, stove and food, in addition to normal walking kit
Fast or section hiking	15–30 litres, depending on conditions	Lightweight kit is possible, but waterproofs, navigation, food, water and a warm layer should still be carried

Camping is not the normal way to walk the Pilgrim's Way to Bardsey Island. Wild camping is not generally permitted in Wales, and there is no continuous campsite infrastructure along the route, so campers need much more careful planning than bed-based walkers.

## **Trekking poles**

Trekking poles are recommended for the full route. They reduce strain over repeated 16–19 km days and are useful on muddy farm paths, wet grass, rougher upland ground and long descents.

Collapsible poles are the most practical choice for inn-to-inn walkers. They can be stowed on lane sections, through towns and when entering accommodation.

## **Water and food carry**

Carry at least 1.5–2 litres of water each day. Some inland stages have stretches with no facilities for several hours, and the Llŷn coast can be hot and exposed in summer.

Natural water sources such as streams and springs may be encountered, but they should be treated before drinking. A small filter or purification tablets are sensible backup items, particularly for long or hot days.

For bed-based walkers, the normal daytime food load is a packed lunch plus snacks. Do not assume every village has an open shop or café at the time needed; packed food should be arranged the evening before when facilities are limited.

Self-carrying walkers may need to carry more food depending on the stage split and accommodation plan. Resupply details change, so this should be checked before travelling.

## **First aid, blisters and ticks**

A blister kit is essential. Include blister dressings, moleskin or tape, antiseptic and a sterile needle, and use preventative taping as soon as hot spots appear rather than waiting for skin to break.

Carry fine-point tweezers or a tick remover. Ticks are a realistic issue in bracken, heathland and woodland, particularly on the Carneddau foothills and inland sections; check legs and waistline each evening.

Insect repellent is useful in summer, especially near wooded or damp areas. Midges are not usually a defining problem on this route, but they can still appear around standing water and boggy ground.

Sun cream of SPF 30+ or higher should be packed for the Llŷn Peninsula, where the cliff paths offer little shade. Apply it to face, neck, ears and forearms even on breezy days.

## **Power and phone reliability**

A power bank is strongly recommended because phone navigation is commonly used over a 14-day route. A 10,000–20,000 mAh unit gives useful margin if a nightly charge is missed or the phone drains quickly in cold, wet weather.

Charge devices at accommodation whenever possible. Mobile signal is generally better in towns and villages, but can be patchy on upland ground and in remoter parts of the Llŷn Peninsula, so offline maps

matter.

## **Seasonal extras**

In spring and autumn, carry an extra warm layer and expect wetter ground. Gaiters become more important, and shorter daylight means a small head torch is sensible even for planned daytime walking.

In summer, increase water capacity for exposed Llŷn coast days and carry sun protection. Warm layers are still needed for windy clifftops and open upland sections.

Winter is outside the normal walking season for most people on this route. If attempting any part in winter, full waterproofs, additional insulation, reliable navigation and very conservative daylight planning are required; micro-crampons may be useful on icy upland sections, but conditions should be checked before travelling.

## **Optional Bardsey Island / Ynys Enlli crossing**

The final boat from Porth Meudwy to Bardsey Island / Ynys Enlli is optional, pre-booked, and dependent on weather and tide. Keep waterproofs, warm layers and valuables protected in dry bags if travelling to the departure cove or taking the crossing.

Do not plan the main walking kit around a guaranteed boat trip. The crossing may not run, so clothing and travel arrangements should allow for waiting in Aberdaron or changing plans at short notice.

## Budget and Costs

Costs on the Pilgrim's Way to Bardsey Island vary sharply because accommodation is unevenly spread. Bangor and Llanberis give the widest choice; villages such as Llanefydd, Gwytherin, Rowen and parts of the Llŷn Peninsula may have only one or two realistic places to stay.

Book accommodation before committing to a daily itinerary. Leaving it late can turn a cheap stage into an expensive taxi detour, especially in August and at the Aberdaron end of the route.

All prices below are approximate and in pounds sterling. Check current prices before booking.

### Typical total cost for a 14-day walk

These estimates assume around 14 overnight stays on or near the route, public transport to and from the trail, and no pre- or post-walk city hotel nights. The optional Bardsey Island / Ynys Enlli crossing is priced separately.

Style	Accommodation	Food	Transport / extras	Likely total, excluding Bardsey	
Budget	£350–560	£280–420		£30–60	<b>£660–1,040 pp</b>
Mid-range	£910–1,260	£490–700	£40–80, plus £200–350 if using taxi luggage transfers most days		<b>£1,440–2,390 pp</b>
Comfortable	£1,260–1,820	£700–980	£80–150 transport/taxis, plus £300–450 luggage transfer		<b>£2,340–3,400 pp</b>

Add roughly **£45–60 per adult** for the optional Bardsey boat and landing fee. This crossing is pre-booked and weather- and tide-dependent, so it should not be treated as guaranteed.

### Accommodation costs

Budget beds exist, but not consistently along the whole route. YHA Snowdon Llanberis is one of the clearer budget options on the line, with dorm beds typically around **£25–40 per night**, depending on day and season; weekend rates can be higher.

Independent hostels, bunkhouses and low-cost pilgrim accommodation are more limited, especially through rural Denbighshire and Conwy. Some church halls or community spaces may accept pilgrims at low cost, but availability must be arranged in advance via the official route accommodation information.

B&Bs and guesthouses are the normal planning baseline. Expect roughly **£50–90 per person per night** when sharing a double room, or **£70–110+** for single occupancy. Prices tend to rise on the Llŷn Peninsula, particularly in summer.

Small hotels and inns commonly sit around **£90–150+ per double room**. Bangor has the broadest range of accommodation on the route, while Aberdaron has very limited choice, including beachfront pub/hotel options; book well ahead for the final night.

Camping is not a reliable budget strategy for this route. There is no continuous campsite infrastructure along the Pilgrim's Way, so camping only works if each night is planned around known legal places to stay. The official accommodation map also lists Pilgrim Pods sleeping two people, with breakfast and packed lunch options, but current prices should be checked directly.

## Food and resupply costs

A realistic daily food budget is **£20–35** if self-catering where possible, using packed lunches and cooking in hostel kitchens. Eating out for most meals is more likely to cost **£40–65 per day**.

Typical rural pub main courses are around **£12–18**. Café lunches, sandwiches and similar daytime food are usually around **£6–12**. Supermarket self-catering can be kept to about **£8–15 per day** where kitchen access and shops line up.

Do not assume every overnight village has a shop or pub. Several rural stages, particularly through the Denbighshire and Conwy hinterland, require carrying food for the day and sometimes for the evening. Bangor is the strongest resupply point, with full supermarket choice.

## Transport to and from the route

For the start at Holywell / Treffynnon, the nearest mainline rail access is **Flint** on the North Wales Coast Line. As a rough guide, Chester to Flint rail fares can be around **£7–15** in advance, and the local bus from Flint station to Holywell is usually about **£2–4 single**.

Aberdaron has no railway station. Most walkers use local buses towards **Pwllheli**, then continue by bus, taxi or rail depending on onward destination. Aberdaron to Pwllheli by local bus is roughly **£4–7 single**, but services are infrequent and can be much reduced on Sundays; this should be checked before travelling.

A taxi from Aberdaron to Pwllheli is likely to be around **£25–40**, but this should be checked with local firms before relying on it. Returning by train from Pwllheli can involve a long route via the Cambrian Coast Line, so many walkers look for bus or taxi connections towards Bangor for the North Wales mainline.

For section-hiking, the North Wales Coast Line is useful for access around Flint, Prestatyn, Rhyl, Colwyn Bay, Llandudno Junction and Bangor. Rural bus coverage becomes more important inland and on the Llŷn Peninsula, and current timetables should always be checked before travelling.

## Luggage transfer and taxis

There is not a standard route-wide luggage transfer service operating in the same way as on some better-served national trails. The practical alternative is to arrange local taxis between accommodation stops.

Budget around **£15–25 per luggage transfer** as a typical planning range. Costs rise if accommodation is off-route or if a taxi has to make a long rural pickup.

Taxi costs are also worth budgeting for as contingency. If a limited-bed village is full, the cheapest room may not be the cheapest plan once evening and morning transfers are added.

## Bardsey Island / Ynys Enlli costs

The optional final crossing runs from **Porth Meudwy**, about **1.8 km / 1.2 miles** from Aberdaron by the coast path. It must be pre-booked and depends on weather and tides.

For a day trip, budget roughly **£45–60 per adult** for the boat plus landing fee, but confirm the boat fare directly as it is set by the operator and has been quoted at different levels. The Bardsey Island Trust landing fee is listed as **£7.50 for adults in 2026**, with under-18s free; check current charges before booking.

Overnight stays on Bardsey Island are separate from the walking budget and are arranged through the Bardsey Island Trust. These are self-catering cottage stays rather than an automatic continuation of the trail itinerary.

## Guidebooks, maps and digital navigation

Official printed guidebooks are available for the full route and as two part-guides. A typical guidebook budget is **£12–16 each**.

GPX files are available free via route resources such as the LDWA and British Pilgrimage Trust pages. Even with a GPX, carry reliable offline mapping for the rural and upland sections, where phone signal and waymarking alone should not be relied on.

## Self-guided packages

Self-guided packages are available for the Llŷn Peninsula sections and for full Pilgrim's Way itineraries through operators such as Edge of Wales Walk. These can include accommodation booking and transport or luggage support, with 5, 7, 10 and 14-day options.

Prices are normally quote-based. As a broad planning figure, rural Wales self-guided packages with accommodation and luggage support can sit around **£1,200–2,500+ per person** for a 14-day itinerary, depending on accommodation standard and inclusions. Contact the operator for current pricing.

## Luggage Transfer, Guided Tours and Support Services

Support on the North Wales Pilgrim's Way is available, but it is not as standardised as on some of the busier UK National Trails. The main choices are a self-guided walking-holiday package, independent taxi-based luggage transfers, or carrying everything and using public transport where it helps.

Because accommodation is spread out and several overnight stops have limited beds, book accommodation first, then arrange baggage movement around the places where you are actually staying. Do not assume a taxi or accommodation provider can handle a same-day request, especially on the Llŷn Peninsula.

### Self-guided packages with luggage transfer

Edge of Wales Walk, based in Aberdaron, is the main specialist operator for supported trips on this route. Packages can cover the full North Wales Pilgrim's Way or shorter sections, with typical durations of 5, 7, 10 or 14 days.

Their packages usually include accommodation, luggage transfer by their own minibus, route maps and a GPS guide unit. They can also collect walkers from Manchester Airport or from train stations at Bangor or Flint, which is useful for visitors arriving without a car.

Provider	Best for	Typical support	Booking notes
Edge of Wales Walk	Walkers wanting accommodation, luggage and route logistics arranged in one package	Hotels, B&Bs or self-catering accommodation; daily luggage movement; route maps; GPS guide unit	Prices are by enquiry. Book well ahead for summer and for full-route itineraries, as beds are limited in some stopping places.

Packages can be adapted to group interests and fitness, which is useful if the standard 14-day pace is too fast or if only the Llŷn Peninsula section is being walked. An optional Bardsey Island / Ynys Enlli visit can be included in the plan, but the boat remains weather- and tide-dependent and is never guaranteed.

### Guided walking options

This route is primarily supported as a self-guided long-distance walk rather than as a regular escorted group trek. Fixed-date guided departures are not a standard feature of the route; this should be checked before travelling if a guided format is essential.

For most competent walkers, a self-guided package or a well-planned independent itinerary is enough. The route is waymarked and non-technical, but navigation confidence is still needed on the upland sections around the Carneddau foothills and on exposed coastal stretches of the Llŷn.

### Independent luggage transfer by taxi

There is no dedicated baggage-forwarding courier covering the whole route end-to-end in the way found on some busier long-distance trails. Independent walkers commonly arrange luggage transfer through local taxi firms, moving the main bag from one night's accommodation to the next while walking with a day sack.

The official route support information gives an indicative cost of about £15–£25 per transfer, but prices depend on distance, waiting time, bag numbers and local availability. Confirm current prices before booking.

Lyn-An, formerly Lyn Ann Taxis, based in Abergele, is listed for the northern/central section around the St Asaph / Llanelwy to Llanfairfechan part of the route. Telephone: 01745 860 656. For the Bangor-to-Aberdaron and Llŷn Peninsula stages, use local taxi firms and book ahead; some operate limited hours and rural coverage can be thin.

A taxi-based luggage plan works best when everything is agreed in advance:

- book all accommodation before arranging bag moves;
- ask each accommodation whether luggage can be dropped off before check-in;
- give the taxi firm the full address, contact number and expected drop-off time;
- label bags clearly with name, phone number and destination accommodation;
- carry valuables, medication, waterproofs, food and navigation kit with you;
- confirm the next day's transfer the evening before.

Mobile signal can be patchy in upland and rural Llŷn sections, so do not rely on sorting out problems from the hillside. Leave a written note or message with accommodation if the driver needs access instructions.

## When luggage transfer is worth it

Luggage transfer is most useful on a 14-day end-to-end walk, where repeated 16–19 km days with ascent become harder with a full pack. It also helps if staying in B&Bs, inns or guesthouses rather than carrying camping equipment.

It is less necessary for strong walkers doing only a short section, or for budget walkers using hostels and bunkhouses who are comfortable carrying a 60–65 litre pack. There is no continuous campsite infrastructure along the whole route, so carrying full camping gear does not remove the need to plan overnight stops carefully.

Walker type	Best support option
Full-route walker wanting minimal logistics	Self-guided package with Edge of Wales Walk
Independent walker with booked accommodation	Local taxi luggage transfers, arranged stage by stage
Strong budget walker	Carry full kit and use hostels/bunkhouses where available
Group with mixed pace or fitness	Custom self-guided package or pre-arranged taxi transfers
Section walker near Bangor or the North Wales coast	Public transport plus occasional taxi support

## Bardsey Island / Ynys Enlli boat support

The optional final crossing to Bardsey Island / Ynys Enlli is a separate, pre-booked boat trip from Porth Meudwy, near Aberdaron. It should be treated as a bonus pilgrimage ending, not a guaranteed final stage.

Mordaith Llŷn, trading as Bardsey Island Boat Trips, operates the crossing from Porth Meudwy. The departure cove is about 1.8 km from Aberdaron by the coast path, or around a 10-minute walk from the National Trust car park at Porth Meudwy.

The crossing takes about 20 minutes each way, with roughly four hours on the island before the return boat. Trips usually run broadly from April to October when conditions allow, but they are always weather- and tide-dependent and may be cancelled at short notice. Check the operator's traffic-light status on the day.

Booking is by phone or WhatsApp on 07971 769895. In summer, book as early as possible; in quieter shoulder-season periods, a few days ahead may be enough, but availability and weather still control whether the trip runs.

Boat fares are set by the operator and have been quoted at different levels by different sources, so confirm the current adult and child fare directly when booking. A separate Bardsey Island Trust landing fee is payable: for 2026 this is £7.50 per adult, with under-18s and Trust members free; check current charges before travelling.

The boat fare is generally payable by cash on the day or by bank transfer rather than by card, but confirm accepted payment methods when booking. The landing fee can usually be paid by cash or card. Dogs are not permitted on the island.

Facilities on Bardsey are limited. There is a small café at Ty Pellaf, with meals by advance order, and a public compost toilet at Plas yard. Carry waterproofs, warm layers, water and any essential food, as the island visit is exposed and the return time depends on the boat schedule.

## **Pilgrim passport, maps and route support**

A Pilgrim Passport is available through the official North Wales Pilgrim's Way website. Stamps can be collected at churches, holy wells and key sites along the route, and the passport acts as a useful record of progress as well as a pilgrimage document.

Official printed guidebooks are also available, including the full-route North Wales Pilgrim's Way guide by Chris Potter and part-guides for Holywell–Rowen and Rowen–Aberdaron. The British Pilgrimage Trust provides digital route options including GPX, Google Maps, OS Maps, Komoot and Outdooractive links.

Carry offline mapping even if using a package GPS unit or phone app. The waymarking is helpful, but weather, farm tracks, woodland paths and open ground make independent navigation essential on several stages.

## **What to book ahead**

The critical bookings are accommodation, luggage transfer and the Bardsey boat if attempting the island crossing. Arrange them in that order: beds first, bag movement second, optional boat last.

Book self-guided packages well ahead for peak season. Book taxi luggage transfers at least a few days in advance and confirm the evening before each move. For Bardsey, check the operator's weather status the day before and again on the day of travel.

## Shorter Hikes and Best Sections

The North Wales Pilgrim's Way is unusually easy to split into shorter walks because it is divided into 25 official waymarked sections, most of them between about 3 and 12 miles. That makes it suitable for day walks, weekends and 3–5 day trips as well as a full two-week end-to-end pilgrimage.

For planning, it helps to think of the route in two halves: Holywell / Treffynnon to Rowen for the inland valleys and historic villages, then Rowen to Aberdaron for the Carneddau foothills and the Llŷn Peninsula coast.

Best for	Start to end	Approx distance	Why choose it	Transport notes
Best short day walk	Porth Oer / Whistling Sands to Aberdaron	3.3 miles / 5.4 km	Short, dramatic clifftop finale into the pilgrimage endpoint	Aberdaron is served by the 17/17B bus from Pwllheli; Porth Oer has National Trust parking. Check current timetables before travelling.
Best upland day walk	Rowen to Penmaenmawr Stone Circles	4.4 miles / 7 km	Carneddau foothills, Bwlch y Ddeufaen and the Druids' Circle prehistoric landscape	Penmaenmawr has a station on the North Wales Coast Line; Rowen is reached by local bus or taxi from the Conwy area.
Best easy coastal add-on	Aberdaron to Porth Meudwy circuit	About 3 miles / 4.8 km	Short circular walk to the cove used for Bardsey Island / Ynys Enlli boat departures	Parking at Porth y Swnt in Aberdaron. Useful before or after the main walk, or when the Bardsey boat is not running.
Best weekend	Eglwysbach to Abergwyngregyn via Rowen and Bwlch y Ddeufaen	About 15 miles / 24 km using the official sections	A compact taste of valley walking, Rowen, open upland and the route's highest-feeling ground	Use the North Wales Coast Line at Penmaenmawr, Llanfairfechan or Bangor, with local transfer to Rowen or Eglwysbach.
Best 3–5 day section	Clynnog Fawr to Aberdaron	About 28 miles / 45 km on official sections	The strongest short version of the pilgrimage: St Beuno's, Llŷn coast, Nefyn, Pistyll, Porth Oer and Aberdaron	Clynnog Fawr is reached by bus from the Caernarfon area; Aberdaron is served by the 17/17B bus from Pwllheli.
Best for beginners	Basingwerk Abbey / Holywell to St Asaph / Llanelwy	About 21 miles / 33 km across Sections 1–6	Short early sections, gentler terrain and strong historic anchors	Use North Wales Coast Line stations such as Flint, Prestatyn and Rhyl, with buses to Holywell and St Asaph.

Best for	Start to end	Approx distance	Why choose it	Transport notes
Best for public transport	Holywell to Llanefydd, or Porth Oer to Aberdaron	Holywell to Llanefydd is about 27 miles / 43 km; Porth Oer to Aberdaron is 3.3 miles / 5.4 km	The north-east has the easiest rail-and-bus access; the Llŷn finale is short enough to manage with a bus and parking plan	St Asaph links by bus to Rhyl rail station; Aberdaron links to Pwllheli by 17/17B. Services can be limited, so check times before setting out.
Best for villages and accommodation	Trelawnyd to Rowen	About 44 miles / 71 km across Sections 5–13	The densest run of Welsh hill villages, churches and traditional overnight stops	St Asaph is the most useful service point in this stretch; accommodation in smaller villages should be booked ahead.
Best for camping	Clynog Fawr to Aberdaron	About 28 miles / 45 km on official sections	The Llŷn coast has more campsite options near the route than the inland sections	Local buses link the Llŷn with Pwllheli; do not assume every official section end has a campsite. Book pitches where required.

## Best Day Walk: Porth Oer / Whistling Sands to Aberdaron

This is the cleanest short sample of the route's final character: exposed Llŷn clifftop walking, sea views and a clear arrival at Aberdaron. At around 3.3 miles / 5.4 km, it is short enough for a half-day but still feels like a proper ending rather than a token stroll.

It is the best choice for walkers who want the emotional finish of the pilgrimage without committing to the whole route. Porth Oer has National Trust parking, while Aberdaron is served by the 17/17B bus from Pwllheli; current bus times should be checked before travelling, especially outside the main season.

## Best Upland Day Walk: Rowen to Penmaenmawr Stone Circles

For a mountain-foothill day without technical terrain, Section 14 from Rowen to the Penmaenmawr Stone Circles is the standout. It crosses the Carneddau foothills towards Bwlch y Ddeufaen, the pass below Tal y Fan, and reaches the Bronze Age Druids' Circle landscape.

The distance is about 4.4 miles / 7 km for the official section, but the practical day may be longer depending on how you reach or leave the section ends. Penmaenmawr has a station on the North Wales Coast Line, while Rowen is normally approached by local bus or taxi from the Conwy area.

## Best Weekend Section: Eglwysbach to Abergwyngregyn

A strong two-day option is Eglwysbach to Abergwyngregyn via Rowen, the Penmaenmawr Stone Circles and Bwlch y Ddeufaen. Using the official Sections 13–15, the distance is about 15 miles / 24 km, although access legs and accommodation locations can add to that.

The first day from Eglwysbach to Rowen is short at about 3.5 miles / 6 km, so it works well as an arrival day. The second day is the main event: Rowen over the open foothills and on towards Abergwyngregyn, with the route passing through the most upland-feeling part of the whole pilgrimage.

Rowen has limited accommodation in and near the village, so book before fixing the weekend plan. Penmaenmawr, Llanfairfechan and Bangor are the most useful rail access points nearby on the North Wales Coast Line.

### **Best 3–5 Day Section: Clynnog Fawr to Aberdaron**

For a short trip that still feels like a complete pilgrimage, Clynnog Fawr to Aberdaron is the strongest choice. Sections 21–25 total about 28 miles / 45 km on the official route, linking St Beuno's Church at Clynnog Fawr with Trefor, Nefyn, Pistyll, Tudweiliog, Porth Oer and the final approach to Aberdaron.

This section gives the highest concentration of coastal walking, pilgrimage heritage and memorable stopping places. It includes the north Llŷn coast, Nefyn, the pilgrim church at Pistyll, Porth Oer / Whistling Sands and the final clifftop approach to Aberdaron.

Fit walkers can combine official sections into three or four longer days; a gentler plan uses five shorter days. Packaged coastal versions may use different daily splits and longer mileages, so confirm the exact itinerary before booking.

Clynnog Fawr is reached by bus from the Caernarfon area, and Aberdaron is linked to Pwllheli by the 17/17B bus. Pwllheli is the main public-transport base for the Llŷn end of the route.

### **Best Section for Beginners: Holywell to St Asaph**

The first six official sections, from Basingwerk Abbey and St Winefride's Well to St Asaph / Llanelwy, are the best introduction for newer long-distance walkers. The individual sections are short, with Sections 1–4 each under 5 miles, and the terrain is gentler than the Carneddau and Llŷn coastal parts of the route.

This stretch also gives a clear sense of the route's purpose, starting at the major pilgrimage sites of St Winefride's Well and Basingwerk Abbey. St Asaph provides a practical finish with services, accommodation and bus links.

For transport, use the North Wales Coast Line at Flint, Prestatyn or Rhyl, then connect by local bus to Holywell, St Asaph or nearby villages. St Asaph has bus links to Rhyl rail station, including the X51 route; check current timetables before relying on a same-day connection.

### **Best Section for Public Transport**

The most convenient part of the route for car-free section walking is the north-eastern half from Holywell towards Llanefydd, especially Sections 1–7. The North Wales Coast Line gives rail access through Flint, Prestatyn and Rhyl, with buses onward to Holywell, St Asaph and nearby route points.

Further west, Bangor is the main transport hub, with mainline rail, National Express coaches and buses towards Caernarfon, Llanberis and the Llŷn. It is one of the best places to join or leave the full route.

On the Llŷn Peninsula, public transport is more limited but still usable with planning. The 17/17B links Pwllheli and Aberdaron, the 8 serves Pwllheli, Nefyn and Tudweiliog, and the 27 links Pwllheli, Llithfaen and Nefyn; Transport for Wales fflecsi on-demand services also cover parts of the peninsula on selected days. All Llŷn bus times should be checked before travelling.

## **Best Section for Villages and Accommodation: Trelawnyd to Rowen**

Sections 5–13, from Trelawnyd to Rowen, are the best choice for walkers who want villages, churches and traditional Welsh hill-country stops rather than the wildest scenery. The route passes Tremeirchion, St Asaph, Llanefydd, Llansannan, Gwytherin, Llangernyw, Eglwysbach and Rowen.

Gwytherin is one of the key pilgrimage points associated with St Winefride, while Llangernyw is known for its ancient churchyard yew. St Asaph is the most useful service centre in this run and has the cathedral at Llanelwy.

Accommodation is not evenly spread, and some villages have very limited beds. Plan this section around confirmed overnight stops rather than assuming there will be somewhere available at the end of each official section.

## **Best Section for Camping: The Llŷn Peninsula**

Camping is most practical on the Llŷn Peninsula, especially from Clynog Fawr towards Aberdaron, because there are more campsites along or near the north Llŷn coast path than on the inland sections. There are also farm and clifftop sites around the Nefyn and Tudweiliog area, and Parsal Farm near Caernarfon lies close to the route with beach access.

This does not make the Pilgrim's Way a continuous campsite-to-campsite trail. The route as a whole has mixed accommodation rather than a reliable camping infrastructure, so pitches and facilities should be checked before setting out.

For public transport, use Pwllheli as the main Llŷn access town, with local buses towards Nefyn, Tudweiliog and Aberdaron. If camping, pay particular attention to shop access and water resupply, as the coastal sections are more remote than the north-east of the route.

## Highlights and Points of Interest

These are the places on the North Wales Pilgrim's Way most worth building time around. Several are not just scenic stops but the reason the route exists: holy wells, early churches, pilgrim staging points and ancient crossings that shaped the line across North Wales.

### **St Winefride's Well and Basingwerk Abbey, Holywell / Treffynnon**

St Winefride's Well is the route's spiritual starting point and one of the most important pilgrimage sites in Britain. Its pilgrimage tradition stretches back more than 1,300 years, and the shrine is often called the Lourdes of Wales.

The late-15th-century chapel is built into the hillside, with spring water rising into a star-shaped basin beneath a vaulted ceiling before flowing into an outdoor bathing pool still used by pilgrims. The well is linked to the 7th-century story of St Winefride, where the spring is said to have appeared at the place of her martyrdom.

Allow time here before starting the walk rather than treating it as a quick photo stop. The ruined Cistercian Basingwerk Abbey, founded in 1131, sits nearby in the Greenfield / Maes-Glas valley and is the official start of the waymarked route.

A small entrance fee has applied at the well, previously £1 adult and 60p concessions; current opening times and prices should be checked before travelling.

### **Maen Achwyfan, near Whitford / Chwitfordd**

Maen Achwyfan is one of the strongest early-route highlights: a 3.4 m free-standing early-medieval wheel cross carved from a single block of stone. It dates from the late 10th century and is a Scheduled Monument managed by Cadw.

The carving is unusually rich, with interlacing, stylised human and animal figures, and Viking or Hiberno-Norse influence from the Irish Sea world. Look particularly for the figure standing on a serpent and holding a spear.

It is a short but memorable pause on the first part of the route, and a useful reminder that this is not only a church-to-church pilgrimage but a walk through a much older cultural landscape.

### **Gwytherin and the St Winefride connection**

Gwytherin is one of the four principal North Wales pilgrim sites on the route, alongside Holywell / Treffynnon, Clynnog Fawr and Bardsey Island / Ynys Enlli. It is a small, quiet Denbighshire village, but its importance is much greater than its size suggests.

The village is strongly associated with St Winefride, whose relics were kept here before being translated to Shrewsbury in 1138. The church at Gwytherin preserves early medieval cross fragments, making it a worthwhile place to slow down rather than simply move on to the next overnight stop.

## **The Druids' Circle / Meini Hirion above Penmaenmawr**

The upland crossing behind Rowen and Penmaenmawr is one of the most atmospheric inland sections of the whole route. The Druids' Circle, known in Welsh as Meini Hirion, is a prehistoric stone circle on the moorland above Penmaenmawr.

Despite the Victorian name, it predates the druids by millennia. The circle is roughly 35 m across, with an embanked setting and large standing stones; excavations in 1957 found a central burial cist containing the cremated remains of a child in an urn.

The setting is a major part of the appeal. In clear conditions there are views west towards Anglesey, east towards the Great Orme / Y Gogarth and out over the Irish Sea.

## **Bwlch y Ddeufaen and the Carneddau foothills**

Bwlch y Ddeufaen means Pass of the Two Stones, named after the two prehistoric monoliths that still stand on either side of the old route. This ancient crossing through the Carneddau foothills has been used since prehistoric times and was later improved by the Romans as part of the road between Caerhun / Canovium and Caernarfon / Segontium.

This is the highest and wildest-feeling part of the route, passing below Tal y Fan rather than over its summit. The route's high point is around 395 m, depending on the GPX used, so do not plan this as a Tal y Fan ascent unless adding a separate mountain detour.

In good weather the pass gives wide views towards Llanfairfechan, the Menai Strait and Anglesey. In poor weather it is exposed, open and easy to underestimate, so this is one of the sections where navigation and timing matter most.

## **Abergwyngregyn and Aber Falls / Rhaeadr Fawr**

Abergwyngregyn is the gateway to Aber Falls / Rhaeadr Fawr, a 37 m waterfall in the northern Carneddau foothills within Coedydd Aber National Nature Reserve. The falls sit in a broad glacial valley, with oak woodland, open hillside and the Afon Goch carrying water down from the high ground.

The waterfall is a short detour from the route rather than something to rush past. The usual walk from the village or car park to the base of the falls is about 3.7 km return, so it is best built into the day if accommodation timing allows.

## **Clynnog Fawr and St Beuno's Church**

Clynnog Fawr is one of the defining pilgrim stops on the Llŷn Peninsula and one of the four key sacred places on the route. St Beuno founded a clas, or monastery-college, here in AD 616, and the later church became a major pilgrimage focus.

St Beuno's Church is strikingly large for such a small village, with a 15th/16th-century collegiate form and castle-like crenellations. By 1500 it was one of only six collegiate churches in Wales.

Inside, look for the carved medieval pilgrim money-chest, hollowed from a single tree trunk. The nearby holy well and traditions around St Beuno's tomb underline why Clynnog Fawr was such an important final rest point before pilgrims continued along the Llŷn towards Bardsey.

## **Porth Dinllaen and Tŷ Coch Inn**

The north Llŷn coast changes the feel of the walk, and Porth Dinllaen is one of the best places to pause. The red-painted Tŷ Coch Inn sits directly on the beach in the National Trust-owned cove, with views over the Irish Sea and Caernarfon Bay.

There is no vehicular access to the inn; it is reached on foot across the golf course or along the beach from Morfa Nefyn. That makes it a natural rest stop on the coastal section rather than a quick roadside diversion.

## **St Beuno's Church, Pistyll**

Pistyll has one of the most distinctive churches on the route: a small pilgrim church with 12th-century origins, largely 15th century in its present form, set inside a circular churchyard. The circular enclosure points to ancient Celtic Christian roots.

The church was a staging post for pilgrims heading west. Its most unusual feature is the leper window in the north-west wall, through which people housed separately in the associated hospice could view Mass without entering the church.

The isolated setting gives Pistyll a very different character from the larger churches at Holywell or Clynnog Fawr. It is a good place to allow a quiet stop if the day's mileage permits.

## **Porth Oer / Whistling Sands**

Porth Oer, commonly known as Whistling Sands, is one of the most memorable natural stops near the end of the route. The National Trust-managed beach is famous for sand that squeaks or whistles underfoot in the right dry conditions.

The sound is produced by rounded silica sand grains rubbing together, and is best heard on dry sand above the tide line. Even when the sand is not sounding, the cliff-flanked bay makes a strong final-stage landmark before the approach to Aberdaron.

## **Aberdaron and Y Gegin Fawr**

Aberdaron is the landward finish of the route: a compact village at the far tip of Penrhyn Llŷn. St Hywyn's Church, partly overhanging the beach, keeps the pilgrim theme alive right to the end of the mainland walk.

Y Gegin Fawr, meaning The Big Kitchen, is a 13th-century building that served pilgrims waiting for a crossing to Bardsey Island / Ynys Enlli. Some waited for days or weeks for safe conditions across Swnt Enlli, the Bardsey Sound; the building now operates as a tearoom.

This is the place to build in flexibility if attempting the optional island crossing. A tight onward travel plan can easily be disrupted by weather or tide.

## **Bardsey Island / Ynys Enlli**

Bardsey Island / Ynys Enlli is the traditional sacred goal of the pilgrimage, but it is an optional final leg rather than a guaranteed part of the walk. The boat leaves from Porth Meudwy, about 1.8 km from Aberdaron by the coast path, and must be pre-booked; crossings are dependent on weather and tide.

Ynys Enlli is known as the Island of 20,000 Saints, linked to the monastery founded by St Cadfan in AD 516. Medieval pilgrims believed that three pilgrimages to Bardsey were the spiritual equivalent of one pilgrimage to Rome.

The island is now a National Nature Reserve and, since 2023, an International Dark Sky Sanctuary. Wildlife interest is significant: Manx shearwaters breed here in globally important numbers, grey seals pup in early autumn, and Risso's dolphins and harbour porpoises are regularly seen from the boat or shore.

The crossing from Porth Meudwy takes roughly 20 minutes. Bardsey Island Boat Trips, operated by Colin Evans, runs day trips; dogs are not permitted on the island. A day-trip landing fee applies, listed for 2026 as £7.50 adult with under-18s free, and current prices should be checked before booking.

## Common Mistakes and Planning Tips

### **Mistake: booking accommodation after setting off**

Accommodation is the main constraint on the Pilgrim's Way to Bardsey Island. Several overnight areas have very limited beds, and the practical 14-day pattern is shaped by where walkers can actually sleep, not by perfectly even mileage.

Places such as Pantasaph, Lloc, Llanasa, Abergwyngregyn and Eglwysbach can be awkward for overnight planning, while stops such as Clynnog Fawr and Trefor may have only very limited camping-style provision. Weekend pressure makes this worse, especially in small villages.

**Fix:** book the whole route before starting, not just the first few nights. Pay particular attention to the Llŷn Peninsula stages from Clynnog Fawr onwards, where alternatives are sparse and a missed booking can mean a taxi transfer to a larger town.

### **Mistake: treating Bardsey Island / Ynys Enlli as guaranteed**

The walk to Aberdaron is the end of the waymarked route. The onward boat from Porth Meudwy to Bardsey Island / Ynys Enlli is optional, pre-booked and dependent on both weather and tide.

Bardsey Boat Trips operates the crossing from Porth Meudwy, but it is not a scheduled ferry. Bardsey Sound has serious rip-tides, and sailings can be cancelled at short notice when conditions are unsuitable.

**Fix:** book the boat separately and build flexibility into the end of the trip. Bardsey Boat Trips can be contacted by call or text on 07971 769 895; passengers should check the recorded message after 18:30 the evening before for the go/no-go status. Do not plan a fixed train, taxi or onward commitment that depends on sailing on one exact day.

Porth Meudwy is about 1.8 km / 1.2 miles from the centre of Aberdaron by the coast path. Sat-nav using LL53 8DA can misdirect, so allow time to reach the departure cove.

### **Mistake: relying only on waymarks or an old GPX file**

The route is waymarked overall, but not every section is straightforward. Route 10 between Gwytherin and Pandy Tudur is not waymarked with Pilgrim's Way markers, and some sections are rough, muddy or slow underfoot.

The route also overlaps with other signed trails, including the Wales Coast Path, North Wales Path, Clwydian Way and Offa's Dyke. Junctions can be confusing where these routes merge or split.

There have also been coastal diversions caused by landslips between Nefyn and Porth Oer / Whistling Sands on Routes 24–25. Older GPX files from third-party apps may not match the route on the ground.

**Fix:** use the current official route GPX and check for diversions before walking each section, especially on the Llŷn coast. Carry OS Explorer mapping as a backup: sheets 265, 264, 253 and 254, plus OL17 for the upland sections. The printed North Wales Pilgrim's Way guidebooks are useful for turn-by-turn detail, but edition dates should be checked against current route changes before relying on them.

## **Mistake: underestimating the Carneddau foothills crossing**

The route does not climb Tal y Fan summit, and its high point is around 395 m rather than 610 m. That can make the upland section sound easier than it feels.

The crossing between Rowen, the Druids' Circle / Penmaenmawr stone circles and Bwlch y Ddeufaen is exposed moorland walking. Paths can be wet or indistinct, the weather can change quickly, and poor visibility makes navigation harder.

**Fix:** treat this as a genuine upland day, not a field-path stroll. Start early, carry waterproofs and warm layers, and use map-and-compass skills or reliable offline GPS rather than depending on waymarks alone. Allow extra time; this section can take longer than its distance suggests.

## **Mistake: assuming every village has food and water**

Many places on the route are small rural settlements, not service centres. Earlier on, Pantasaph and Lloc have no dependable listed food provision, while Trelawnyd has limited options.

The Llŷn Peninsula needs particular care. Between Clynnog Fawr and Aberdaron, villages such as Llithfaen, Llangwnnadi, Pistyll and Porth Oer / Whistling Sands have no shops or only seasonal snack facilities. Aberdaron has a SPAR, cafés and pubs, but it is the only reliable service point in the final stretch.

**Fix:** carry lunch, snacks and enough water for each full stage. Refill at known, reliable places such as accommodation, cafés or pubs when available, and do not assume a pub will be open for weekday lunch or outside peak season. Natural water should not be treated as automatically safe.

## **Mistake: making the daily stages too ambitious**

A 14-day schedule typically keeps most days around 17–19 km, but that does not mean the walking is easy. The route includes sustained ascent, muddy field paths, rough tracks, moorland and exposed coastal walking.

Trying to compress the walk into fewer days often creates long arrivals into villages with limited food or accommodation. It can also leave walkers reaching overnight stops too late for dinner, particularly where pubs have restricted opening.

**Fix:** plan around accommodation and services first, then distance. Combining stages should only be done where the next overnight stop is definitely booked and the terrain, ascent and daylight allow it.

## **Mistake: leaving transport home from Aberdaron to chance**

Aberdaron is at the tip of Penrhyn Llŷn / the Llŷn Peninsula, around 30 km from Pwllheli, the nearest rail connection. It is not a place to finish and assume a frequent train or bus will appear.

Public transport is limited. Fflecsi demand-responsive buses cover Aberdaron to Pwllheli seasonally, broadly April to October, and must be booked in advance through Fflecsi Wales. Local bus route 17/17B between Pwllheli and Aberdaron is infrequent.

From Pwllheli, trains run on the Cambrian Coast Line towards Machynlleth and onwards to Aberystwyth or via Shrewsbury towards Birmingham.

**Fix:** arrange the finish before starting the walk. Pre-book a taxi to Pwllheli, book Fflecsi where appropriate, or use a self-guided operator's end-of-route collection. This should be checked before travelling, especially outside the main walking season.

### **Mistake: ignoring Welsh place names on signs**

Many signs and place names on this route use Welsh, especially through rural Denbighshire, Conwy and Gwynedd. This can cause real confusion at junctions if only the English names are familiar.

Examples include Treffynnon for Holywell, Llanelwy for St Asaph, Eryri for Snowdonia and Enlli for Bardsey. Some maps, waymarks and local signs may favour one form over the other.

**Fix:** learn the Welsh names of the main overnight stops before setting off, and mark both versions on the itinerary. This is especially useful when matching signs, accommodation addresses, bus information and GPX waypoints.

## Final Advice

### Who should walk it

The North Wales Pilgrim's Way is best for reasonably fit walkers who want a two-week pilgrimage route with history, churches, holy wells, coast and upland crossings, rather than a wilderness trek or a peak-bagging itinerary. It is moderate in technical terms, but still a serious long-distance walk: 216 km / 134 miles, roughly 14 days, and about 6,035 m of ascent on the LDWA figures.

Capable first-time long-distance walkers can take it on if they have trained for consecutive days of about 16–19 km. It is not a good choice for walkers who are unprepared for repeated full days on foot, muddy paths, exposed Welsh weather and occasional navigation across open country.

### The main thing to get right

Accommodation is the planning constraint. Several overnight places are small, and villages such as Llanefydd, Gwytherin and Llangernyw do not have a deep supply of beds; the Llŷn Peninsula stages can be especially tight. Book accommodation before committing to fixed daily distances, then shape the itinerary around the beds that actually exist.

If Bardsey Island / Ynys Enlli is important, plan the crossing before fixing the final date at Aberdaron. The boat from Porth Meudwy is optional, pre-booked, seasonal and entirely dependent on weather and tide; it should never be treated as guaranteed.

Bardsey Island Boat Trips / Mordaith Llŷn, operated by Colin Evans, runs the passenger boat and can be contacted on 07971 769 895 by phone or WhatsApp. The season is broadly spring to autumn, with a 12-passenger capacity. There is a separate Bardsey Island Trust landing fee, listed as £7.50 per adult for 2026 with under-18s free; the boat fare is set by the operator, so confirm current prices before booking. The crossing takes about 20–30 minutes each way and normally allows around four hours on the island.

Check whether the sailing is running the evening before by listening to the recorded message after 18:30. There is no toilet at Porth Meudwy, so use facilities in Aberdaron first, and dogs are not allowed on Bardsey Island except guide dogs.

### Full route or section walking?

A full thru-hike gives the route its strongest meaning: Basingwerk Abbey and St Winefride's Well at Holywell / Treffynnon to Aberdaron, then onward by boat to the island if conditions allow. The gradual movement from borderland, valleys and churches to Eryri / Snowdonia foothills and the far end of Penrhyn Llŷn is what makes the walk feel like a pilgrimage rather than a collection of day walks.

Section walking is still a sensible way to complete it. The route is divided into 25 official waymarked sections, and the northern half has better public transport access than the more remote Llŷn Peninsula. Walkers who prefer structure or company can also look at the annual May pilgrimage walk organised by the Diocese, or at self-guided packages of roughly 5, 7, 10 or 14 days with luggage transfer.

## **The payoff**

The Carneddau foothills around Rowen, Penmaenmawr, the Druids' Circle and Bwlch y Ddeufaen provide the most dramatic inland walking. Later, the Llŷn coast gives the route its strongest final act, especially through the stages around Nefyn, Pistyll, Porth Oer / Whistling Sands and the clifftop approach to Aberdaron.

For walkers who reach Bardsey Island / Ynys Enlli, the boat crossing is the emotional finish rather than just an add-on. Build in flexibility if that final leg matters: a weather day at the end is far better than leaving North Wales frustrated by a cancelled sailing.

## **Final recommendation**

Treat this as a steady, reflective 14-day walk, not a route to rush. Keep daily stages realistic, carry reliable navigation, expect changeable conditions, and leave time for the churches and historic sites along the way. The passport stamp scheme at 23 churches and sites adds a useful structure for walkers who want to engage with the pilgrimage side of the route, not just the mileage.