

Wales Premier Gardens 10 Day Tour

Wales, on Britain's western shores, is the setting for some of the most beautiful gardens in the country, each with their own story to tell.

Joined together as Premier Gardens Wales, the largest gardens in Wales, celebrate the best of what Wales' gardens have to offer those visiting the country, from the grandeur of Portmeirion in the north to the remarkable restoration at Aberglasney in the south west, not forgetting of course, the fascinating garden rooms of Dyffryn in the south east.

Other gardens making up Premier Gardens Wales are just as special – be it the unique social insight offered by the Museum of Welsh Life or the blossoming National Botanic Garden of Wales.

The National Trust properties of Bodnant, Plas Newydd, Erddig, Chirk, Powis and Penrhyn also form an important part of the group with their spectacular garden displays, stunning backdrops and unique histories.

Join us on this spectacular journey around Wales' gardens.

After collecting you from the airport or your hotel we head for Wales and Powis Castle your first garden of the tour, stopping en-route for some light refreshments.

The world-renowned gardens of *Powis Castle* will provide hours of enjoyment for anyone with an interest in gardening and horticulture.

From the formal terraced gardens overhung with enormous clipped yew trees, to walled kitchen gardens, shrub gardens and Victorian orangery, you'll find interesting and rare plants everywhere.

Chirk Castle with its commanding position affording far-reaching views, has gardens extending to 5.5 acres of hilltop beauty. The gardens won the National Trust/Gordon's Gin Garden of the Year award in 1999.

Set against some of the finest examples of 19th century yew topiary, there's always something special to see between March and October. There are spectacular displays of daffodils and other bulbs in spring and the garden abounds with mature rhododendrons. Stroll in the deliciously scented rose garden, admire the herbaceous borders or discover the rarest shrubs in the shrub garden.

Erddig is a very special place. It is a unique family home that has captured the way of life of a bustling household community during the early years of this century. Below stairs a fascinating collection of portraits, photographs and verses records the people who spent their working lives on the estate, and tells of the Yorke family's high regard for their servants. Upstairs the rooms contain an original collection of 18th century furniture and are filled with the accumulated treasures of a family that never threw anything away from the rare and beautiful, to the trivial and commonplace.

Your visit starts in the estate buildings where the joiner and blacksmith worked, through the Midden Yard, with saw mill and cart sheds, to the Stable Yard with its tack room, carriages, vintage cycles and cars. From there you will continue to the laundry, bake house and kitchen.

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Erddig's walled garden is one of the most important surviving 18th century gardens in Britain. It has rare fruit trees, a canal, pond and a National Ivy Collection.

Conwy is the classic walled town. Its circuit of walls, over three quarters of a mile long and guarded by no less than 22 towers, is one of the finest in the World. Conwy castle is a gritty, dark stoned fortress which has the rare ability to evoke an authentic medieval atmosphere. It was constructed by the English monarch Edward I between 1283 and 1289 as one of the key fortresses in his 'iron ring' of castles to contain the Welsh.

Plas Mawr also known as 'The Great Hall' is an Elizabethan townhouse built between 1576 and 1585 for a prominent Welsh merchant.

Penrhyn Castle is set against the stunning backdrop of Snowdonia, Both the Castle and its garden enjoy magnificent views over the Menai Strait.

The garden extends to a full 40 acres and comprises many different environments, including open parkland, woods, formal garden and even a semi-tropical area, where a new belvedere has been constructed. Here visitors can admire the views even in the worst of weather

Bodnant Gardens occupy a south westerly position on terraced ground above the River Conwy with commanding views across the valley towards the spectacular Snowdonia range.

Recognised as one of the finest in the world, the vast collection of plants, some familiar, many unusual, provide colour and interest whatever time of year that you visit.

Plas Newydd the home of the Marquess of Anglesey is situated on the banks of the Menai Strait; this elegant 18th century house, built by James Wyatt, commands magnificent views of the beautiful mountains of Snowdonia.

There is a fine spring garden, an Australasian arboretum with an under storey of shrubs and wild flowers, as well as a summer terrace and later massed hydrangeas and autumn colour. A woodland walk gives access to a marine walk on the Menai Strait. Plas Newydd houses an exhibition devoted to the work of Rex Whistler, and his largest painting commissioned by the 6th Marquess of Anglesey in the 1930s can be seen in the dining room. The 5 acre rhododendron garden, with a Himalayan atmosphere, was created by the 6th Marquis, and restored by the present Marquess.

The Military Museum contains many fascinating relics of the 1st Marquess of Anglesey who commanded the cavalry at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815.

Take a break from Wales' gardens with a drive into the heart of Snowdonia. The Snowdonia National Park covers 823 square miles of the most beautiful and unspoilt countryside in North Wales. After a thrilling drive over the world famous Llanberis Pass you will stop in Beddgelert.

Beddgelert is undoubtedly Snowdonia's loveliest village. Its stone built dwellings, inns and hotels are surrounded by the finest scenery in North Wales. Snowdon, the highest peak in England and Wales, dominates the skyline a few miles to the north.

The beautiful Aberglaslyn Pass and the Nant Gwynant valley are near-neighbours. Wooded vales, rocky slopes and mountain lakes fill the surrounding countryside.

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The village, in keeping with its location in the Snowdonia National Park, is picturesque and unspoilt. Small and friendly,

There can be few people who have not heard of *Portmeirion* architect Clough Williams-Ellis's Italianate village on its own private peninsula in North Wales. The village, which Williams-Ellis built between 1925 and 1976, has become famous as the setting for the popular cult 60's TV series, *The Prisoner*.

Apart from the attractions of the architecture, there are 70 acres of sub-tropical Victorian pleasure gardens and woodland to explore, with magnificent sea views and an abundance of interesting plant life. The gardens won a Gold Medal at the 1999 Chelsea Flower Show.

Dyffryn House is a Grade 1 listed building and the gardens boast a number of interesting features. The garden rooms are set among broad sweeping lawns, a croquet lawn with an arboretum and wild garden

Aberglasney is set within nine acres and has six different garden spaces including three walled gardens. At the centre of the garden is a unique and fully restored Elizabethan/Jacobean cloister and parapet walk, giving wonderful views over the Gardens, which contain a rich and diverse collection of plants.

After opening in 2000 the *National Botanic Garden of Wales* is blossoming into one of the most beautiful and stimulating gardens in the UK. Created within a beautiful 568 acre Regency rolling parkland and secluded woodland it is home to a unique collection of over 100,000 different plants.

The longest herbaceous border in Europe leads visitors to the awe inspiring largest single span Glasshouse in the world, designed by Lord Foster and partners. Housing an acclaimed collection of Mediterranean plants from across the world this iconic Glasshouse has won several international awards.

Visitors can also choose from a variety of award-winning outdoor gardens such as the Japanese Garden, Apothecaries' Garden and Genetic Garden. A beautiful unique double walled garden, with its kitchen garden and elegant lily ponds, is a special recent addition.

From the formal gardens of the privileged classes to the first organic gardens that sustained a growing, working family, the gardens at the *Museum of Welsh Life* are a fascinating and inspiring horticultural attraction, offering a unique insight into social history.

Stroll through the picturesque grounds surrounding St Fagans Castle, the restored Victorian roseroy and parterre. Rest a while on replicas of the original Plymouth garden seats above the magnificent terraces sweeping down to reflective pools and ponds.

Compare this spectacle with the cottage gardens where traditional tools and techniques are used in the recreated domestic plots. From rare and beautiful blooms to heirloom vegetables and herbs - all at one of the best open air museums in Europe set in 100 acres of beautiful countryside

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Prices start at just £2,075 per person based on 2 people sharing double/twin rooms on a bed and breakfast basis. Transport to and from Heathrow is included in the price as is entrance to the following gardens:-

Powis Castle
Chirk Castle
Erddig
Conwy Castle
Penrhyn Castle
Bodnant Gardens
Plas Newydd
Portmeirion
Llanerchaeron
Dyffryn Gardens
Aberglasney
National Botanic Gardens

Also you will have a farewell dinner on your last night courtesy of Cambrian Routes Limited as a thank you for your company.