7 Night Heritage Trains of Snowdonia



Trip style:

Destination:
Snowdonia

Carbon Footprint:
186kg CO2

HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

Ride the rails through Snowdonia's spectacular scenery aboard full-size steam engines, narrow-gauge trains, and cliffside funiculars. This wonderful way of exploring Wales sees you journey through ancient oak woodlands, by thundering waterfalls, and over dramatic ridges aboard the Ffestiniog Railway and Welsh Highland's immaculately restored rail carriages. You'll also enjoy Victorian charm as you chug through the countryside on the Talyllyn Railway and top it all by taking the Snowdon Mountain Railway to the dramatic summit of Yr Wyddfa (Snowdon) itself. Please note that, because of the nature of train timetables, the order of your days may change from the published itinerary.

WHAT YOU'LL LOVE

- Ride on the Talyllyn Railway, the world's first preserved railway
- The scenery in the Vale of Rheidol
- Experience a trip on the Ffestiniog Railway, the world's oldest narrow-gauge railway
- Journey on the Welsh Highland Railway, a stunning highlight of the week
- Taking the Snowdon Mountain Railway up to the summit of Snowdon (weather and season permitting)
- A more personalised experience thanks to small group sizes (maximum 15 people in 2026 and 16 people in 2027)

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- En-suite accommodation in our 4-star country house
- Cream tea on arrival day
- Cooked or continental breakfast every morning
- Daily packed lunches
- Three-course evening meals, plus tea & coffee
- Guided sightseeing with an experienced HF Holidays leader
- All transport included in the itinerary
- All entrance fees and rail tickets
- Easy-to-follow routes, maps and information in our Discovery Point if you want to explore independently

ITINERARY - ITINERARY

Day 1 Arrival Day

Check-in at the hotel is available from 16:00. If you are a member you can arrive at the house from 14:00. Enjoy a complimentary cream tea at 16:30 and meet other guests.

Day 2 Welshpool and Llanfair Railway & Bala Lake Railway

To begin our holiday, we head almost back to England to the charming Welshpool and Llanfair Railway, travelling through delightful pastoral scenery. This line has an eclectic range of rolling stock drawn from around the world. Then it's on to the Bala Lake Railway - a narrow-gauge line re-opened on the former Great Western main line.

Day 3 Corris Railway, Talyllyn Railway & Fairbourne Railway

Today we start with the relatively short Corris Railway and its museum and engine shed. Then it's on to the Talyllyn Railway which boasts of being one of the longest operating heritage railways – a delightful experience. Finally, we go down to the coast at Fairbourne to take a ride on the miniature railway to the river mouth and back again.

Day 4 Free Day - Southern Snowdonia

Discover more about Dolserau Hall and the local area for ideas on how to make the most of your free day.

Day 5 Llanberis Lake Railway & Snowdon Mountain Railway

We visit the narrow-gauge Llanberis Lake railway today and head along the shores of Llyn Padarn. Then, weather permitting, we will ascend Snowdon on the unique rack railway where we will have time to visit the highest visitor centre in the UK before taking the return journey down.

Day 6 Aberystwyth & the Vale of Rheidol Railway

This morning, we go south to Aberystwyth for a visit to the Cliff Railway, Britain's longest electric funicular railway. Next up is the Vale of Rheidol Railway which opened in 1902 for the transportation of lead ore and was operated by British Rail until 1989. We take a trip through beautiful scenery to Devil's Bridge before our return.

Day 7 Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways

Our final day is a journey on the two lines around Porthmadog. First, the Ffestiniog Railway from which includes dramatic scenery and a spiral curve at Dduallt, part of the 'Deviation' built by volunteers in the 1960s and 70s. The double-ended Fairlie locomotives are another special feature of this line. Our journey continues aboard the Welsh Highland Railway, which passes stunning mountain scenery with views of Snowdon on its way to Caernarfon.

Day 8 Departure Day

Enjoy a leisurely breakfast before making your way home.

ACCOMMODATION

Dolserau Hall

We're delighted to share that Dolserau Hall has now reopened following a significant investment in this much-loved Welsh HF Country House. With beautifully updated social spaces, refreshed bedrooms, and thoughtful enhancements throughout, it's the perfect moment to rediscover this special spot in southern Eryri (Snowdonia). Read more. Dolserau Hall enjoys arresting countryside views at this Victorian manor house at the southern end of Snowdonia (Eryri) National Park. The location is idyllic; think ancient woods and craggy uplands in all directions (parts of the park served as the inspiration for Middle Earth in JRR Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings). There's no shortage of things to do, either, including following the Mawddach Trail along the edge of the Mawddach Estuary, discovering the compact range of hills known as the Rhinogs, and climbing the rugged foothills of Cader Idris – the highest mountain in southern Snowdonia (Eryri) at 893 metres. You'll also be close to Dolgellau, the small market town best known for its once flourishing woollen industry (ruins of the Pandy fulling mills used to remove fats and grease from the wool cloth can still be seen along the Afon Aran River). With only 21 rooms, it's one of HF Holidays' smaller country houses and 40% of it's rooms are reserved for singles, making it easier than ever to have your own space.

About

· 21 well-appointed guest rooms · Exclusive occupancy: 31 guests minimum · Check in from 4:00pm · For members check in from 2:00pm · Full-board (including a cream tea welcome) · Free Wi-Fi · Free on-site parking · Boot room and drying room · Discovery Point offering a wide range of local area maps, route guides, and information for self-guided walks · Books and games to borrow · Licensed bar · Lounge · Garden · Well-behaved dogs welcome · Electric vehicle charging point - Please note, you will need to bring your own cables to use this EV charging point

Then & now

It was at Dolserau Hall (meaning 'meadow of the stars') where Robert Owen lived with this wife Jane before boarding the Vine – the ship carrying Welsh Quakers from Merionethshire to Pennsylvania in 1684. While the house remained in the family thereafter, it was destroyed by a fire and subsequently rebuilt. No remains of the old house are visible, but the foundations were uncovered during an excavation at a nearby mill site a few years ago. The present Dolserau Hall was built in 1863 for Charles Edwards, a Justice of the Peace who was MP for Windsor and later High Sherriff of Meirionnydd. His design brief was one of Victorian glamour, resulting in the porticoed entrance, large galleried hall, impressive staircase, and stained glass windows with coats of arms. The house was used as a private residence for various occupants over the years, including Sir Eric Ommanney Skaife, brigadier and patron of Welsh culture, who lived here during the 1940s. It opened as a hotel in 1972 and has been part of our HF Holidays line-up since 2011.

Today, Dolserau Hall has benefited from a light refresh of the communal areas and has 21 well-appointed guest rooms in two categories (Classic and Premium) spread across the main house and the converted coach house. You'll also find a comfortable main lounge, a licensed bar, a dining room for a wide range of dishes made with fresh and seasonal ingredients, and a smaller room that's perfect for light lunches, snacks, and evening activities. Elsewhere, there's a handy boot and drying room, books and games to borrow during your stay, and a Discovery Point offering a wide range of local area maps, route guides, and easy-to-follow information for self-guided walks. Also worthy of your attention are the five acres of gardens and grounds offering views across to the valley to the summit of Cadair Idris.

Check-In & Check-Out

You are welcome to check in from 4pm at the earliest. HF Members can check in earlier, from 2pm. On arrival, you'll enjoy a complimentary cream tea and get to meet your fellow guests, our HF Holidays Leaders, and the rest of the friendly team. Check out 10am.

FOOD & DRINK

Dining

Seasonal dining, tailored for you

Our team of skilled chefs design our dinner menus to showcase the best of each season, from warming winter comfort food to vibrant summer dishes, including vegetarian, vegan and high-protein options. We also source fruit and vegetables within a 40-mile radius of each house, open every break with a Chef's Special menu inspired by dishes and flavours of the local area, and are able to adapt dishes to suit special dietary requirements.

Welcome Cream Tea

What better way to start your stay than with a cream tea, served fresh on arrival to make you feel instantly at home. A quintessentially English tradition, our scones are baked in-house and served with preserves and clotted cream, providing the perfect opportunity to meet fellow walkers.

A hearty breakfast to start the day

Start the day with a freshly-prepared cooked breakfast and a wide choice from our continental buffet, including hot drinks, juices and fresh fruit. Our team offer a quick and friendly service, leaving you fuelled and ready for your day's adventures.

Our famous picnic lunch

Our personalised picnic lunches are perfect for a day out walking, ready to enjoy when hunger strikes. Choose from a large selection of fresh sandwiches and salads, freshly baked cakes and snacks, including the ever-popular Freddos chocolate bar! Everything is designed to fit neatly into your rucksack, and all of the packaging we provide is recyclable or compostable.

3-course evening meals

Our à la carte evening menus feature a wide choice of starters, mains, and desserts, made with seasonal ingredients and, wherever possible, herbs and vegetables from our own gardens. Shared around sociable tables, dinners are relaxed occasions, with drinks available to order at the table or from the bar, and a traditional Sunday roast to round off the week.

ROOMS

Your room at Dolserau Hall

A choice of guest rooms at Dolserau Hall

Designed with your comfort in mind, Dolserau Hall has 21 well-appointed guest rooms available in two categories: Classic and Premium.

Classic Rooms are comfortable en-suite guest rooms, ideal for a peaceful night's sleep. Amenities include free Wi-Fi, tea and coffee-making facilities, toiletries (hand wash, shampoo, and shower gel), and a TV.

Premium Rooms are more spacious en-suite guest rooms*. Amenities include free Wi-Fi, tea and coffee-making facilities, toiletries (hand wash, shampoo, body lotion, shower gel), and a 32-inch TV. Extras include bathrobes, slippers, and comfortable mattresses.

We love: The rooms in the main house or converted coach house. Some come with standout views of Snowdonia (Eryri) National Park.

Premium single	Premium double/twin	Choose your room
£20 pppn	£20 pppn	£30 per room

*Views and layout reflect each properties unique character and location

Choose Your Room Service

Some guests love choosing a particular room, for the view, a quiet spot in an annex, or to be close to the dining room. Many return to the same room time and again, creating a familiar and comforting sense of place for only £30 per room.

ACCESSIBILITY

For accessibility and assistance information, please contact our expert team on 020 3974 8865 or view the accessibility information online for Dolserau Hall

ABOUT YOUR STAY

A warm welcome
We want you to feel comfortable from the moment you arrive. You'll find a welcome pack in your room with guest registration forms, menus, order forms for dinners and picnic lunches, the Wi-Fi password, and the front door code. Our houses are locked at night, so we recommend noting the Duty Manager's number on arrival in case of an emergency (or getting locked out).

Evening entertainment

While evening entertainment varies from house to house, HF Holidays Inter-House Quiz night held after dinner on Wednesdays is a weekly staple. Your HF Holidays leader may be around for tips on guided and self-guided waking routes as well as visit-worthy local attractions.

Helping you enjoy the Great Outdoors - A natural focus on walks

Walks talks and Discovery Points
Our founder, country pastor turned social innovator, Thomas Arthur Leonard, was passionate about encouraging people to explore the countryside. His legacy continues in HF's continued focus on walking. Many guests choose to travel with us on guided or self-guided walking holidays, and as such, evenings at our houses are often busy with walk leaders hosting various briefings and talks. On guided walking holiday arrival days, there are walking information briefings before dinner, and for the duration of any guided walking holiday there will be a Walks Talk before (or on occasion after dinner), to go through the following day's walk options. Self-guided walking guests, and those on special interest holidays (where there is free time to explore independently), are of course welcome to also join in these Walks Talks - please talk to the team locally if you have any queries. Our Discovery Points are filled with handy maps and route notes, designed to ensure everyone, not just those booked on a guided walking holiday, can enjoy the beautiful countryside settings that our HF houses enjoy.

The walking day
Prior to setting off on guided walks, our HF Holidays Leaders run through a short safety briefing. There's also an up-to-date weather forecast on display at the house to ensure walkers have appropriate clothing and footwear. If you choose to do your own walks or are on a self-guided walking holiday, we ask that you please complete an Independent Walker Card each day. These can be found near the Discovery Point in the house.

TRAVEL DETAILS

Address

Dolserau Hall
Dolgellau
Gwynedd LL40 2AG

Tel: +44 (0)1341 422522

By train

The nearest station is Machynlleth.

For train times and to plan your route check National Rail.

By taxi

The 16-mile journey from Machynlleth railway station takes about 30 minutes.

For pricing, please contact Cader Cabs directly.

Cader Cabs

A local, 24/7 firm, who can provide transport from nearby train stations and bus stops. No pre-booking is required.

Cader Cabs are offering a 10% discount on all taxi journeys for guests coming to or going from Dolserau Hall.

Tel: +44 (0)7766 983 103

Email: info@cadercabs.co.uk

*Cader Cabs are not owned or managed by HF Holidays.

By bus

From Machynlleth take the T2 bus to Dolgellau. You can complete the two-mile journey to Dolserau Hall by taxi. Or if you alight at Dolgellau Starbucks, it's a one-mile walk along a quiet country lane to the house.

By car

It takes about 90 minutes to drive from the M56 at Chester or the M54 at Telford to Dolserau Hall.

From the north
Head to Chester, then take the M53 and A55 to join the A550, followed by the A5104 for about 20 miles, then finally the A494 signposted to Bala.

Stay on the A494 through Bala heading towards Dolgellau. A mile after going past a junction for the B4416 to Brithdir, take the next turning on the left to follow the country lane for half a mile to Dolserau Hall.

From the south
Take the M54 and A5 to Shrewsbury to join the A458 towards Welshpool. Continue on the A458 through Welshpool and after 27 miles turn right at a roundabout onto the A470 towards Dolgellau. As you come down a steep hill before Dolgellau, look out for a petrol station on the right. Take a right turn immediately before it, then you'll find Dolserau Hall is about one mile along this country lane on your left.

By Shared Transfer

If you're travelling to or from Dolserau Hall on Mondays or Fridays, you can join our group transfer from Shrewsbury Railway Station.

2026
Prices are £30 per person for a return transfer or £15 per person for a single transfer.

Outward journey: Depart Shrewsbury Railway Station at 15:00; arrive at Dolserau Hall at 16:40.
Return journey: Depart Dolserau Hall at 09:00; arrive at Shrewsbury Railway Station at 10:40.

2027
Prices are £90 per person for a return transfer or £45 per person for a single transfer.

Outward journey: Depart Shrewsbury Railway Station at 15:00 ; arrive at Dolserau Hall at 16:45.
Return journey: Depart Dolserau Hall at 09:00 arrive at Shrewsbury Railway Station at 10.45.

Places are limited so booking is essential. We recommend booking at least 14 days in advance by contacting:

HF Holidays Sales and Support Team
Tel: 020 3857 7758
Email: reservations@hfholidays.co.uk

By air

The nearest airport is Manchester Airport.

You'll need to allow around five hours, firstly taking the train to Chester, changing to the Sapphire bus to Wrexham, and from there taking the T3 bus to Dolgellau.

LOCAL AREA

Places to visit in Snowdonia

Whether you're enjoying a guided or self-guided walking holiday, there's always the opportunity to linger for longer. Here's our pick of the very best things to see and do within easy travelling distance of Dolserau Hall.

Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railway

Established in 1832, this heritage line offers nearly 40 miles of Snowdonia (Eryri) scenery. The Ffestiniog Railway runs from Porthmadog to Tan y Bwlch while the Welsh Highland Railway travels from Caernarvon to Beddgelert. Porthmadog station is a 40-minute drive away.

Great Little Trains of Wales

A collection of little steam railways, this makes for an enchanting way to discover the visually-striking Welsh countryside. The Snowdon (Yr Wyddfa) Mountain Railway has been taking passengers to the mountain's summit since 1896 (early bookings are highly recommended).

National Slate Museum

A 90-minute drive away, this Llanberis-based museum is housed in the industrial Victorian workshops once used for serving and maintaining the Dinorwic slate quarry. Highlights include watching slate being cut by hand and visiting the terrace of quarrymen's houses.

Caernarfon Castle

Just over an hour's drive away, this fortress-palace on the banks of the River Seiont was built by Edward I. The Royal Welsh Fusiliers Museum is located inside the castle and offers a wealth of exhibits that tell the story of the oldest infantry regiment in Wales.

Harlech Castle

A 45-minute drive away, Edward I's stone fortress dominates the landscape and affords incredible views across Snowdonia (Eryri). The castle is largely a ruin, although the huge inner walls and towers still stand almost to their full heights.

Criccieth

A 50-minute drive away, this seaside town is famed for its 13th century castle ruins overlooking Cardigan Bay. Highlights include relaxing on the beach and stopping for an ice cream at Cadwaladers - the esteemed Welsh ice cream parlour founded here in 1927.

Llechwedd Slate Caverns

A 40-minute drive away, this visitor attraction is best known for its deep mine tour that descends 500 feet underground. Highlights include learning about the subterranean chambers and enjoying a fabulous light and sound display at the underground lake.

Bodnant Gardens

Just over an hour's drive away, these breathtaking gardens spread across 80 acres offer wonderful views of Snowdonia (Eryri). Founded in 1874 and given to the National Trust in 1949, highlights include the Italianate terraces, wildflower meadows, and woodland.

Plas Newydd House

A 90-minute drive away, the historic home of Lady Eleanor Butler and Sarah Ponsonby (the so-called Ladies of Llangollen) was a stone cottage converted into a gothic fantasy. The mansion also comes with 40 acres of garden and 129 acres of woodland and parkland.

Portmeirion

Designed by celebrated Welsh architect Sir Clough Williams-Ellis in the mid-1920s, this Italianate-style coastal village is an hour's drive away. For walkers, not-to-be missed sights include the Dwyryd Estuary and the subtropical forest known as The Gwyllt.

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Packing list

To enjoy your holiday comfortably and safely, it's essential that your clothing and footwear are suitable for the conditions likely to be encountered. Changeable weather is possible throughout the year, so our advice is to come prepared for all eventualities – hot, cold, wet, or dry.

All of our Heritage Tours involve active sightseeing and you should, therefore, be prepared for walking between the sights and wear flat, comfortable shoes. You will be spending most of the day on your feet. In the evening most guests wear casual clothing. You will probably find a small rucksack or cross-body bag useful for carrying spare clothing, a camera, sun protection, and drinks during the day.

TRIPNOTE VALIDITY

TRIP NOTE VALIDITY These Trip Notes are valid based on the date printed at the bottom of the page. They will occasionally be updated post booking and pre-departure. We will send you the latest trip notes prior to departure through a link in your pre departure documents or we can send you a copy in the post if preferred. In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any doubt about your suitability you should call HF Holidays and ask to speak to one of the team about this itinerary. The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; so please be prepared to be flexible where necessary. At times, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned due to weather conditions, political, physical or other factors. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

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