

The Beacons' Way Guided Trail

Tour Style: Guided Trails

Destinations: Brecon Beacons & Wales

Trip code: BRLBW

Trip Walking Grade: 5



HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

The Beacons' Way is a beautiful eight day trail through outstanding scenery across the Brecon Beacons National Park. It traverses three mountain ranges - The Black Mountain, Brecon Beacons and Black Mountain. There is much of interest to enjoy along the route and your reward will be the satisfaction of completing one of the least walked, most spectacular trails in Britain.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- High quality en-suite accommodation in our Country House
- Full board from dinner upon arrival to breakfast on departure day
- 8 days guided walking
- Use of our comprehensive Discovery Point

HOLIDAYS HIGHLIGHTS

- Complete one of the least walked, most spectacular trails in Britain
- Traverse three mountain ranges - The Black Mountain, Brecon Beacons and Black Mountain

TRIP SUITABILITY

This Guided Walking /Hiking Trail is graded 5. Good fitness and stamina required. Paths on the first few days are well defined but steep. The second half of the trail remains hilly and traverses sections of rugged, sometimes pathless, high and remote country. Be prepared to complete some challenging back to back mountain days. It is your responsibility to ensure you have the relevant fitness required to join this holiday.

Fitness

We want you to be confident that you can meet the demands of each walking day and get the most out of your trail holiday. Please be sure you can manage the mileage and ascent detailed in the daily itineraries. It is important for your own enjoyment, and that of your fellow guests that you can maintain the pace.

It makes a lot of sense to spend time getting some additional exercise before your holiday. We suggest that you try to fit in a number of longer walks, including some on hilly terrain. Other exercises such as cycling, jogging and swimming are also excellent for developing increased stamina.

ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrival Day

Day 2: Holy Mountain (Skirrid) To Llanthony Priory

The summit of Skirrid has the foundations of a ruined chapel (dedicated to St Michael) and great views of the Black Mountains. We circle the northern end and cross the Hereford road to climb Hatterall Ridge. After a short stretch alongside the Offa's Dyke path we take a long gradual descent to Llanthony Priory in the beautiful Ewyas Valley.

10½ miles (17km), with 2,640 feet (800m) of ascent

Day 3: Llanthony Priory To Crickhowell

We go steeply up to the Gadair Ridge, turn south to reach the "stone of vengeance" and descend to the ancient Partishow church. From here it's a short steep climb up Crug Mawr where we drop to cross the Vale of Grwyney and skirt the flanks of Pen Cerrig Calch and Table Mountain and descend to Crickhowell village below.

12½ miles (20km), with 3,200 feet (980m) of ascent.

Day 4: Crickhowell To Llangynidr

Climbing to a grassy track around the western side of Pen Cerrig Calch we enter a beautiful 'lost' valley. Passing through Cwmdru the climb of Cefn Moel reveals Llangorse Lake (of TV Timewatch fame). We drop down into Bwlch ('pass' in Welsh) before crossing the River Usk to finish at the pub in Llangynidr.

12 miles (19km) with 2,800 feet (850m) of ascent.

Day 5: Llangynidr To Storey Arms

Our most mountainous day. We pass beneath Tor y Foel to join a minor road high above the Talybont reservoir. After sharing a section of the Taff Trail, The Beacons' Way now changes character abruptly and we begin with a very steep climb up Craig y Fan Ddu. Now deep in mountain country we follow spectacular escarpments to summit Fan y Big, with its famous 'diving board' rock. There are stunning panoramic views here. Ahead is Pen y Fan, the highest point in southern Britain at 2,907ft (886m) which we reach via a tough ascent from Bwlch gr y Fan (on the route of an old Roman Road). From here the nearby 'twin' peak of Corn Du is an easy stroll. There

is then a long descent to reach Storey Arms.

14 miles (22.5km) with 4,300 feet (1,300m) of ascent.

Day 6: Rest Day

A day without any walks programmed, giving you the opportunity to explore the local area independently

Day 7: Storey Arms To Craig-y-nos

We tackle the remote mountain and high moorland country around Fan Fawr. Having looked over the abyss below Craig Cerriggleisiad we turn south for a gradual ascent of Fan Dringarth and Fan Llia before descending to join Sarn Helen (Roman Road). We pass an old Roman Camp and the standing stone of Maen Madoc; cross Nedd Fechan (River Neath) and head across the limestone and millstone grit country of Penwyllt. We pass by lovely limestone pavements and drop to Craig-y-nos.

14 miles (23km), with 2,500 feet (750m) of ascent.

Day 8: Craig-y-nos To Llanddeusant

The Carmarthen Fans are on the northern edge of Black Mountain. The escarpment, which we spend most of the day on, is over 4 miles long; we climb it by the flank of Allt Fach to walk on the crest of Pen Hir to look down on Llyn y Fan Fawr (large mountain lake) to reach the summit of the range at Fan Brycheiniog – 2,613ft (802m). After the huge triangular plateau of Fan Foel with awesome views in all directions, we turn west looking directly along to the outstanding Picws Du & Bannau Sir Gaer which overlooks another lake - the legendary Llyn y Fan Fach (little mountain lake). Skirting the cliffs around the lake we turn north to drop down by Carnau Llwydion.

10 miles (16km), with 3,280 feet (1,000m) of ascent

Day 9: Llanddeusant To Castell Carreg Cennan

This area is remote and it is a demanding day. Our first target is the Carreg yr Ogorf top and then the summit of Garreg Las 2,100ft (630m). The millstone grit boulders here require careful walking. A faint path reaches Foel Fraith past more shake holes en-route. The ascent up to Garreg Lwyd is relatively gentle and we then go to the Bronze Age cairn at top of Pen Rhiw-du, then on to Carn Pen-y-clogau and down to the old Brynaman to Llangadog turnpike road. There's a twisting track down into the chasm in front of Castell Carreg Cennan and a short climb to the car park.

14 miles (22.5km), with 3,000 feet (920m) of ascent.

Day 10: Castell Carreg Cennan To Bethlehem (And Llangadog)

An easier day to finish! We visit the castle (Cadw - Welsh Heritage - entry £4.00). Built on older foundations the existing castle is 13/14th century. We also pass two huge Iron Age hill forts, Carn Goch and Y Gaer Fach. Bethlehem is the official end of the walk, though we continue to Llangadog where we can relax and enjoy a well earned drink!

10 miles (16km), with 1,225 feet (370m) of ascent.

Day 11: Departure Day

ACCOMMODATION

Nythfa House

Pretty country pile Nythfa House stands above the traditional mid-Wales market town of Brecon and sits within easy reach of the Brecon Beacons National Park. Having spent its early life as a large private house, the building has been converted into a comfortable country hotel. The interiors look like they've evolved naturally over time, staying rooted in the local area and house architecture while being filled with contemporary furniture and colours. As well as 28 rooms and a range of public spaces and an inviting indoor pool to tempt you, there are pretty grounds and a short walk to the streets of Brecon itself. The contrasting countryside close by provides challenges including sweeping ridges, an ascent of the Black Mountains and scaling Pen-y-Fan as well as more subtle strolls through the river-carved landscapes of the Melte Valley, along the trail of a series of awesome waterfalls, or time dawdling through the second bookshops in Hay-on-Wye.

Matchless Country House Accommodation

Accommodation Info

Need To Know

Important Covid-19 Steps We Have Taken For Guest Safety: Please Read

As we slowly reopen in the wake of the Coronavirus lockdown, our country house stays are set to be organised a little differently; extra steps have been taken to keep our guests, house teams and leaders safe while we return to action. We ask all our guests to respect the measures put in place.

Initially the overall capacity of the houses has been reduced. Guests must wear face coverings in public spaces. To adhere to social distancing guidelines, we have taken the necessary steps to space out furniture and seating in public areas. In addition, a one-way system will be in place around the house. Adequate signage will be displayed to support the direction of travel to be followed by guests and house teams.

As a temporary measure, we will not be servicing rooms during a stay. Extra tea, coffee, milk, and toiletries will be made available on request for all guests. It is recommended that guests bring their own toiletries for the duration of their stay. We have removed all non-essential and reusable items from our rooms for the meantime including cushions, hairdryers, bathrobes, bed throws, and printed materials to reduce the number of items that need to be disinfected. Hairdryers will be available on request. Clean towels will be available on request. We will though be increasing the frequency of cleaning in our public areas providing particular attention to frequently touched items including door handles and handrails.

For now, there is no cream tea on arrival day. We have also adapted our food offering to remove all buffets and open food items. Different sittings may be required for breakfast and dinner due to the occupancy and size of the house. Picnic lunches will now be pre-ordered the night before from an order form in the room. The bar in each country house will be open, and we will be offering a table service for drinks. At this time there is no, or only a very limited, evening social programme available. Outdoor swimming pools at those houses that have them will re-open throughout August, except at Freshwater Bay House, where the pool will remain closed for 2020. Indoor swimming pools will remain closed.

For more information and to see all the steps taken, [visit our page on how house stays will be adapted](#).

Rooms

Tea & coffee-making facilities, TV, Hairdryer, Toiletries, Wi-Fi

Stay in the smartly presented rooms in the main house or in one of the handful of garden rooms across the grounds. With 28 rooms, Nythfa House has plenty of space and there's a range of Good, Better and Best Rooms to choose from. Opt for Rooms 6 or 7 in the main house for delightfully decorated, spacious places to stay, each with sumptuous views over the garden and Brecon Beacons. Room 21 is a quirky 'Better' room up in the eaves, with a separate sitting space and cosy bedroom, just mind your head on the low ceiling. Look out for the fresh floral designs in the pretty garden rooms too, which have their own small deck.

All 'Good' rooms are ensuite and furnished to a high standard. There are also several 'Better' and 'Best' Rooms that are either larger or have a desirable view, a more luxurious mattress and larger television – upgrade your stay for just an extra £15-25 per person per night. You can choose a specific room for an extra £30 per room, subject to availability. Upgrade supplements still apply.

Facilities

Free Wi-Fi, boot room and drying room, extensive garden, indoor swimming pool, lounge, library and board games to borrow

After a day exploring cascade country or the Beacons, come back to the house and its specially tailored walkers' facilities. At the front of the house there's a pretty garden to pause in, with a putting green and croquet lawn attached. Duck into the conservatory to enjoy views out over the gardens from under the twisting branches of an old vine. Across the way in a separate building is a good-sized indoor swimming pool with floor-to-ceiling windows at one end. Whether you relax in the lounge, or get together with other guests for a board game or great conversation, make sure to make time for the cosy bar, and try a dram of award-winning whisky from the local Penderyn distillery, which uses water from the Brecon Beacons National Park. There's also a Welsh gin that's wonderfully well regarded.

Food & Drink

As at all our country houses, holidays are full board, from afternoon tea served as a welcome treat through that evening's meal to a hearty breakfast on the day of departure. Lunch is a chance to stock up on our famous picnic snacks. Food at Nythfa House is varied and tasty and has a strong emphasis on ingredients from the area and seasonal produce. Once a week the dining room in the converted barn hosts a Local Food Night, when, over a sociable evening, you might try a five-course feast of regional flavours. Make a beeline for the big bay window table to try Cawl Cennin, a leek broth, served with a Welsh Rarebit finger, followed by Tatws Pum Munud, a speciality Welsh potato dish, or double roasted Welsh lamb. The kitchen offers up an Asian influence as well courtesy of the towns Gurkha community, and you might enjoy Nepalese momos (dumplings) or fillet of sea bream marinated with Nepalese spices for an alternative take on local tastes. Whatever, round your evening off with South Wales marmalade sponge with lashings of Penderyn whisky custard.

Accessibility

For accessibility and assistance information, please contact our expert team on 020 3974 8865

TRAVEL DETAILS

Our address is: Nythfa House, Brecon, Powys, LD3 7NN
Tel: [01874 624287](tel:01874624287)

By Train:

The most convenient railway station is at Abergavenny. For train times and route planning by train visit www.nationalrail.co.uk or phone 03457 48 49 50.

By Taxi:

The 20-mile journey from Abergavenny railway station takes approximately 40 minutes. You can pre-book a taxi from our recommended taxi company, A&A Cabs. As a guide price, it cost £35 per 4-seat taxi in 2020. 8-seat taxis are also available at a higher rate. A&A Cabs will arrange shared taxis wherever possible. Please pre-book your taxi at least 7 days in advance by contacting:

A&A Cabs*

Tel: +44 (0) 1874 622288

Email: aandabrecon@yahoo.ie

The return taxi journey can be arranged on your behalf by the Nythfa House Manager.

*A&A Cabs is not owned or managed by HF Holidays

By Bus:

The X43 bus operates from Abergavenny station to Brecon. Alight at the bus interchange in Brecon. Facing the road, head left along Heol Gouesnou to the traffic lights. Turn right heading uphill along Cerrigcochion Road for around 70 yards, and then turn left into Belle Vue Gardens. Head along the road and turn right at the T-junction (still Belle Vue Gardens). Head up the road to another T-junction and turn left into Cerrigcochion Lane. Walk for about 15 yards and you will see the Nythfa House sign on your right. For bus times see

www.traveline.info

By Car:

Most guests approach Brecon via the A40 from Abergavenny or the A470 from the northwest. These two roads converge at a roundabout on the Brecon bypass. At the roundabout follow the B4601 for a mile into Brecon. Turn right at the second mini roundabout, then go straight on at the cross roads with traffic lights. After 500yds turn sharp right into Mount Street, then second left into Belle View Road. Stop at the top of the road at the T Junction then go straight ahead up the drive to Nythfa House.

Travelling From Overseas

For most guests, travelling to London Heathrow airport is the most convenient option.

From Heathrow first take the train to London Paddington station. From here there are trains to Abergavenny (1 change at Newport) - allow 3 to 3½ hours. See www.nationalrail.co.uk for train times.

From Abergavenny you can travel on to Brecon by bus or taxi (see above).

LOCAL AREA

During your stay at Nythfa House you may enjoy visiting the following places of interest, either in your free time, or on your journey to and from Brecon:

Brecon is a quaint market town at the foot of the Brecon Beacons; an area of sweeping high moorland, and beautiful green valleys. The town has a good range of facilities including shops, supermarkets, post office, chemists, banks, pubs and cafés. During your stay you may enjoy visiting Brecon Cathedral or take a scenic cruise from Brecon along the Monmouthshire and Brecon canal. www.breconcathedral.org.uk or www.dragonfly-cruises.co.uk

Big Pit Mining Museum

Travel underground at the excellent Big Pit museum in Blaenavon and discover the life of a South Wales coal

miner. Blaenavon is around 45 minutes' drive from Brecon. www.museumwales.ac.uk/en/bigpit

Hay-on-Wye

The quaint small town of Hay-on-Wye is about 30 minutes' drive from Brecon, and can also be reached by bus every 2 hours. The town is now famed for its annual literary festival, and extensive selection of second-hand book shops.

Hereford

Hereford is an attractive city, around an hour's drive from Brecon, whose cathedral houses the famous Mappa Mundi, a 12th century map of the world. www.herefordcathedral.org

Dan Yr Orgof Caves

An impressive show-cave, one of the largest in Europe, with fine stalactites and stalagmites. The caves are around 30 minutes' drive from Brecon. www.showcaves.co.uk

Tretower Court

Located near the village of Crickhowell, about 20 minutes' drive from Brecon, Tretower Court is a fine Medieval fortified manor house. www.cadw.wales.gov.uk

Cardiff

The vibrant Welsh capital of Cardiff is also around 40 miles or 1 hour's drive from Brecon. A visit could include the St Fagan's National History Museum, Castell Coch, or the National Museum. www.visitcardiff.com

Tretower Court image © Crown copyright (2016) Welsh Government, Big Pit image ©Big Pit National Coal Museum

USEFUL HOLIDAY INFORMATION

Holiday Information

We try to create a relaxed atmosphere on the walk but please listen to safety instructions from your leader.

Keep members of the group in view especially when weather or visibility is poor. If you leave the group, then your leader will no longer have responsibility for you. Our leaders consider the safety of the group as a whole and are likely to be more cautious over potential risks such as bad weather.

What To Bring

"There's no such thing as bad weather, just the wrong type of clothing!" goes the adage. Come prepared for all eventualities and you'll walk in comfort as well as safety. Britain's famous for its changeable weather, so here's our advice on what to wear and bring.

Essentials

- Waterproof walking boots providing ankle support and good grip.
- A waterproof jacket and over-trousers
- Gloves and a warm hat (it can be chilly at any time of the year)

- Rucksack
 - Water bottle (at least 1 litre capacity)
 - A small torch (everywhere in winter, year round in mountains)
 - Sun hat and sunscreen
- Denim jeans and waterproof capes are not suitable on any walks.*

Recommended

- Several layers of clothing, which can be added or removed
- Specialist walking socks to avoid blisters.
- A first aid kit inc plasters– your leader's first aid kit doesn't contain any medication
- Sit mat (insulated pad to sit on when you stop for a break)

You Might Also Want

- Walking poles, particularly useful for descents.
- Insect repellent
- Flask for hot drinks
- Rigid lunch box
- Gaiters
- Blister kit (eg Compeed) just in case
- Waterproof rucksack liner

Useful Information

Our experienced and knowledgeable volunteer leaders undergo a thorough assessment to lead you on your Guided Walking/Hiking Trail and are delighted to share their knowledge and enthusiasm with you.

Please ensure you complete and hand in your registration form on arrival and let the leader know about any medical problems you may have. This may be useful in the event of a problem on the walk and will be treated confidentially by the leader.

In The Event Of A Problem

If you become separated from the party, please stay where you are. Your leader will retrace their steps to find you.

All our leaders carry a mobile phone, group shelter, spare maps and a compass. In the unlikely event your leader is incapacitated, please use any emergency kit in their rucksack. Call the emergency services (call 999 in the UK, or 112 overseas).

Please then try to call the hotel where you are staying to let them know there is a problem.

Your trail leader will carry all the necessary maps and guides. For your own interest you may consider buying or looking at the following:

<http://www.breconbeaconsparksociety.org/national-park/the-beacons-way/>

Ffordd y Bannau The Beacons Way by John Sansom - Arwel Michael - Chris Barber. Route guide for the walk (2011 edition)

The Land of the Beacons Way by Dilys Harlow.

Explorer OL13, Explorer OL12 maps.

Ticks

Ticks are tiny creatures that live in vegetation and can attach themselves to passing animals or walkers and may carry a risk of Lyme Disease. Please refer to NHS advice and guidelines for information prior to your holiday.

HOW TO BOOK

When you're ready to book, you can choose to **book online** or book **over the phone**. Our website offers secure online booking for our holidays, is available 24/7, and offers more in-depth information about all our holidays. If you prefer to call us, our experienced and knowledgeable team are available to answer any specific questions you have and can offer guidance as to which holiday is best suited to your needs.

Our office is open: Monday to Friday: 9am – 7pm Saturday: 9am – 1pm Sunday & Bank Holiday Monday: closed

PAYING YOUR DEPOSIT

To secure the holiday of your choice, you will need to pay a deposit: UK & European Holidays: £150 per person and Worldwide Holidays: £250 per person. You can pay your deposit by debit or credit card with no additional card fees charged or make an online BACS payment directly into HF's bank account, please see details under BACS payments. You can also pay your deposit by cheque within seven days of booking. Cheques should be made payable to 'HF Holidays Ltd' with your booking reference / Order ID on the back.

NON-MEMBER FEE

Non-members can join our holidays by paying a Non-Member's fee of £20 per person per holiday. Alternatively, full membership is available from £100 – visit hfholidays.co.uk/membership for details.

BACS PAYMENTS

Please quote your booking reference / Order ID when you make your payment online: Bank Name: Svenska Handelsbanken AB (publ) Account Name: HF Holidays Ltd Account Number: 35923304 Sort Code: 40-51-62 IBAN: GB92HAND40516235923304 Swift / Bic Code: HANDGB22

Once we have received your booking and deposit, we will send a confirmation invoice to the lead name. Please check this carefully. For bookings 'with flights' it is essential that the names on your booking confirmation invoice match those on your passport for bookings overseas. Please advise us immediately of any errors. Any name changes after the balance of your holiday has been paid will be subject to a fee levied by the airline.

MANAGE MY BOOKINGS

Payments can also be made through the Manage My Booking function on our website. Click on the link at the top of our homepage. This is available to all customers who provide an email address at the time of booking.

YOUR FINAL BALANCE

The balance is due 10 weeks before departure. As with paying your deposit, you can pay your final balance by debit or credit card, make an online BACS payment directly into HF's bank account or pay by cheque.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Travel insurance is an important part of any booking and essential for one of our holidays. HF Holidays works with specialist Insurance Brokers Campbell Irvine Direct. For more information or to obtain a quote call them

on 01702 427 236 or visit hfholidays.co.uk/insurance

PEACE OF MIND

ATOL:

The air holidays and flights in this brochure are ATOL-protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 710. In the unlikely event of our insolvency, the CAA will ensure that you are not stranded abroad and will arrange to refund any money you have paid us for advance bookings. For further information visit the ATOL website atol.org.uk

MEMBER OF ABTOT:

HF Holidays is a member of ABTOT (The Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited) which provides financial protection under the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992 for HF Holidays Ltd and in the event of their insolvency, protection is provided for the following: 1. non-flight packages commencing in and returning to the UK; 2. non-flight packages commencing and returning to a country other than the UK; 3. flight inclusive packages that commence outside of the UK and Republic of Ireland, which are sold to customers outside of the UK and Republic of Ireland. 1, 2 and 3 provides for a refund in the event you have not yet travelled. 1 and 3 provides for repatriation. Please note that bookings made outside the UK and Republic of Ireland are only protected by ABTOT when purchased directly with HF Holidays Ltd.

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.

PRICE GUARANTEE

We promise that our earliest published prices will always be the best and if we reduce our holiday price after your booking has been confirmed, we will pass this reduction on to you. Our price promise applies if any subsequent offer price is for an identical holiday, duration, location and date and does not cover any optional extras, flights or additional services.

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