

# Wales, Marshes, Monmouthshire & Brecon

The 41 mile Llangollen Canal leaves the Shropshire Union Canal junction north of Nantwich in rural Cheshire and passes through farmland into Wales. It is widely reputed to be the most beautiful canal in Britain and certainly the most popular. The World Heritage site Pontcysyllte Aqueduct carries the Llangollen Canal over the valley of the River Dee. It is the longest and highest aqueduct in Great Britain.

The Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal is currently inaccessible from any other waterway and offers 35 miles of quiet pretty countryside from Brecon to Cwmbran. It runs through the Brecon Beacons National Park and has just a few locks.



Pontcysyllte Aqueduct



## Boat Layouts

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*"We have already booked another holiday with you"*

# Feature Routes

## Llangollen & return

☾ 7 P3 N4 L8 H2

- The Llangollen Canal is arguably the most beautiful canal on the whole system.
- Combines the gentle countryside of Shropshire and the more dramatic landscape of the Welsh border.
- It boasts one of the most striking features on the UK canals – the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct which can be reached from both Whitchurch and Wrenbury in a week or 4 night mid week break from Whitchurch (you will not be able to cross over the aqueduct in a 3 night weekend break).
- Unusually, this canal has a flow of 2mph as it feeds other canals, so the outbound journey will always be slower than on the way back.
- The last locks are at New Marton, half way between Ellesmere and Chirk.
- From there on, as it clings to the hillside contours, an enchanting blend of aqueducts and tunnels takes the canal, lock free, to Llangollen.
- New visitor moorings in Llangollen are now available, but charges do apply and you need to arrive by 4.30pm.
- Take a steam train ride ([www.llangollen-railway.co.uk](http://www.llangollen-railway.co.uk)) from Llangollen up the Dee Valley.
- Visit the ruins of Castell Dinas Bran.

## Chester or Ellesmere Port & return

☾ 7-10 P3 N4 L8

- On this popular countryside route the locks are well spaced for easy cruising.
- You can choose to travel to Chester and then retrace your steps back to the marina or continue along the Shropshire Union main line to its historic terminal on the River Mersey at Ellesmere Port.
- Mooring in Chester is within easy reach of the walled city centre with its medieval 'rows' where there are a variety of shops, galleries and the majestic cathedral.  
([Chester TIC 01244 402111](tel:01244402111) / [www.chestertourism.com](http://www.chestertourism.com))
- Chester Zoo is just a short walk from the canal.  
([01244 380280](tel:01244380280) / [www.chesterzoo.org](http://www.chesterzoo.org))
- The fascinating National Waterways Museum ([0151 355 5017](tel:01513555017) / [www.nwm.org.uk](http://www.nwm.org.uk)) at Ellesmere Port is a few locks beyond Chester, near to the junction with the Manchester Ship Canal.
- The museum has an extensive collection of preserved inland waterway craft and display areas in many of the former warehouses.

## The Cheshire Ring

☾ 7-14 P5 N5 L5 See page 18 for more details.

## Four Counties Ring

☾ 7-14 P4 N4 L10 See page 12 for more details.

## Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal

☾ 7 P3 N4 L24

- The canal meanders its way through the Brecon Beacons National Park for 36 miles with remarkable diversity of scenery often following the magnificent River Usk.
- This canal is considerably quieter than others, as it is isolated from the main canal network.
- It is arguably one of the most picturesque canals as it offers glorious views of the Brecon Beacons along the way.
- The canal clings to the mountainside and brings about its uniquely shallow levels.
- Lime kilns remain as well as an aqueduct dating from 1812.
- There is a licensed restaurant at the Wharf and is a popular place for visitors.
- Pontymoile at one end of the canal is a convenient mooring place for Pontypool Leisure Centre with its swimming pool and dry ski slope.
- Moor at Llangattock and visit Crickhowell a wonderful Georgian town, with excellent shopping and good food.
- Crickhowell also has a 13th century castle and a 17th century bridge.
- Picturesque Talybont-on-Usk rests below the Central Brecons between the Usk and the Canal.
- Nearby Talybont Reservoir offers bird watching, trout fishing and easy walks to the waterfalls at Blaen y Glyn.
- Brecon is a charming old market town and one of the most historic settlements in Wales.
- Brecon is a popular holiday destination, affording some of the best views of the Brecon Beacons themselves and Pen y Fan – the highest point in Southern Britain at 886m.
- There is something for everyone as Brecon is home to a cathedral, theatre, cinema, castle ruins and stunning Georgian architecture.
- Brecon is a great place to explore the National Park with walking routes, cycle hire and pony trekking all available.



# Short Breaks

Weekends: Friday to Monday (3 nights)  
Midweek: Monday to Friday (4 nights)

## Whitchurch or Wrenbury & return

☾ 3 P3 N4 L8 H2

After cruising through remote countryside, Grindley Brook is quite a contrast. With 6 locks, 3 as a staircase with a lock-keeper, waiting in turn gives time to unwind and fully take in this relaxing holiday experience. Whitchurch is very good to explore within a weekend break as is Wrenbury.

## Ellesmere & return

☾ 3 P3 N4 L8 H2

The run into Ellesmere is through an area of outstanding beauty, with a series of Ice-Age lakes known as 'meres' very close to the canal.

## Hurleston Junction & return

☾ 3-4 P3 N4 L8 H2

For those wanting a bit more activity you can cruise east towards the English end of the canal.

## Chirk & return

☾ 3-4 P3 N4 L8 H2

Towards the Welsh border at Chirk the country's fine hills come into view and the scenery becomes altogether more dramatic.

## Chester or Ellesmere Port & return

☾ 4 P3 N4 L8 See 7 night trip for more details.

## Llangollen & return

☾ 3-4 P3 N4 L8 H2

The canal hugs the side of the River Dee valley on its approach to the town of Llangollen.

## Llangynidr & return

☾ 3 P3 N4 L24

You can choose a leisurely lock-free cruise with fine views along the dramatic Usk Valley by turning below the lock at Llangynidr village, or if you want the experience of locking the boat, you can turn just above the first lock.



## Talybont-on-Usk & return

☾ 4 P3 N4 L24

This trip takes you further up the canal climbing 5 gorgeous locks passing through the Ashford Tunnel to the village of Talybont-on-Usk where you can still see the wharf with its lime kilns and the old tramroad up the side of the mountain.

# Route Suggestions

Route	Start	☾*	☀	📖
Llangollen & return	Whitchurch	7	4	4
	Wrenbury	7	5.5	24
	Blackwater	7	1.5	4
Chester & return	Anderton	7	5.5	44
	Wrenbury	7	4	46
	Whitchurch	7	5	66
	Gailey	10	6.5	44
	Blackwater	7	6	66
Ellesmere Port & return	Anderton	7	7	52
	Wrenbury	7	5.5	54
	Whitchurch	7	6.5	74
	Gailey	10	8	52
	Blackwater	7	7.5	74
The Cheshire Ring	Anderton	7	8	92
	Wrenbury	10/11	6.5	114
	Whitchurch	14	6	137
	Blackwater	14	7	137
Four Counties Ring	Anderton	10/11	6.5	102
	Wrenbury	10/11	6.5	112
	Whitchurch	14	6	132
	Gailey	7	8.5	110
	Blackwater	14	7	132
Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal	Goytre	7	7.5	12

# Short Break Suggestions

Route	Start	☾*	☀	📖
Whitchurch & return	Wrenbury	3	6	20
Wrenbury & return	Whitchurch	3	6	20
Ellesmere & return	Wrenbury	3	8.5	20
	Whitchurch	3	5.5	0
Hurleston Junction & return	Wrenbury	3	4	16
	Whitchurch	4	6	32
Chirk & return	Wrenbury	4	8.5	24
	Blackwater	3	5	4
Chester & return	Wrenbury	4	8	46
Ellesmere Port & return	Wrenbury	4	10.5	54
Llangollen & return	Whitchurch	4	8+	4
	Blackwater	4	6	4
Llangynidr & return	Goytre	3	7	0 or 2
Talybont-on-Usk & return	Goytre	4	7	10