

Conwy

The pretty town of Conwy is one of the UK's best-preserved medieval towns, enclosed by its castle and huge stone walls. The narrow cobbled streets are home to a range of interesting independent shops, cafes and numerous historic buildings, whilst the wide sandy beach at Conwy Morfa ('shore' in Welsh) and Conwy mountain are walkable from the town. Here are our top tips - you could easily combine them with a visit to nearby Llandudno to complete your day.

Getting there

Take the B5106 north all the way to Conwy; there is a large car park signposted on the left just before you reach the castle walls (pay and display).

Alternatively you can park in nearby Llandudno Junction and walk the short distance back to the town - this gives you a fantastic view of the castle, walls and quayside as you approach on foot.

For this continue on the B5106 into Conwy, and pass under the castle wall. At the roundabout turn right and drive over the bridge across the river estuary. At the next roundabout turn left (A546 to Llandudno) and take the first left after LIDL (Glan Y Mor Road). Follow this round (it's a dead end) and park on the road next to the railway (you will see the large building of Collinge Antiques which is also visible from the estuary bridge). Don't park in LIDL - there is a 90 minute limit. Take the steps back up to the bridge you drove across and walk back towards Conwy.

You can carry on from here to Llandudno along the coast via Deganwy after your visit to Conwy!

Historical sights

Once the gateway to Conwy, **Thomas Telford's suspension bridge (1)** - parallel to the modern road bridge - is now managed by the National Trust (NT) and is open to visitors every day of the year, whatever the weather.

The **castle (2)** is managed by CADW (Welsh heritage) and is part of the World Heritage Site which also includes Caernarfon, Harlech and Beaumaris castles.

The **town walls (3)** form almost a complete circular walk around Conwy and encompass its medieval centre; there are several points at which you can access them - free! It's a great way to get a different perspective on the town - and have a nosy into its nooks and crannies!!

Aberconwy House (NT) (4) is a 14th century merchant's house and the only one its type to have survived Conwy's turbulent history since then.

Plas Mawr (CADW) (5) is one of the finest Elizabethan town houses still intact in the UK today - it has served several purposes since it was built including a courthouse, school and art gallery.

Finally, the **smallest house** in Britain **(6)** can be found on the quayside (painted bright red and usually with a queue outside). It's something of a tourist trap but if you must....!

Get into nature

From the north end of the quay, follow signs for the North Wales Path to enter the **Conwy mountain nature reserve** (see also Walk 11 in our green Pathfinder Guide 'Snowdonia, Anglesey

and the Llyn Peninsula'). After the upwards climb you will be rewarded with panoramic views from Anglesey in the west, south down the Conwy Valley and east to the Clwydian mountains - and even as far as Liverpool bay on a clear day.

Conwy Morfa (shore) is a beautiful beach which can be reached on foot by following the North Wales Path from the north end of the quay; turn right when you come to the road (Morfa Drive); take the next left (Ellis Way) and then left at the roundabout onto Meirion Drive). Finally turn right onto Beach Road, pass the caravan park and into the car park to access the beach. If you want to drive to Conwy Morfa, take the A547 from the town centre towards Bangor, pass over the A55 and take the next left which is Beach Road. Parking is free.

RSPB Conwy - this nature reserve is run by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB). Located on the east bank of the Conwy river estuary near Llandudno Junction, it was created from material dug out during construction of the A55 road tunnel which runs underneath the town. It is now home to a wide variety of birds and wildlife - including Carneddau mountain ponies who graze the southern part of the reserve!

Explore the arts / antiques

The **Royal Cambrian Academy (7)** on Crown Lane (just off the High Street, behind Plas Mawr) was constituted in 1881 by Queen Victoria, and is a centre for artistic excellence in Wales. Royal Cambrian Academicians (Members) are practising painters, sculptors, printmakers and architects and the Academy aims to exhibit their work, promote up and coming artists of quality, mount historical exhibitions and offer a lively venue for education.

The Potters Gallery (8), on the High Street just around the corner from Aberconwy House, specialises exclusively in contemporary ceramics - several of our breakfast pieces are from here! All the ceramics are individually designed and hand made by selected co-operative members - artist potters who have studios in the region. Sells a wide range of work from domestic wares to unique decorative items, from figurative, sculptural and quirky creations to wall pieces and much more – something for all tastes and price ranges.

Enjoy some food and drink

These are some our favourite cafes/pubs and food shops in Conwy.

a. L's Coffee & Bookshop, High Street

Good range of vegan and veggie options, and good coffee and cake; small outside courtyard during summer.

b. Cantin, Conwy Culture Centre / Library, Town Ditch Road

Light lunches, cakes and hot & cold drinks with indoor and covered outdoor seating.

c. Johnny Dough's at The Bridge, Rose Hill Street

Second branch of a local pizza restaurant (the other is in Llandudno) - delicious wood fired pizzas, North Wales beer and gins. Fun in the evening. Also does takeaway!

d. Edwards of Conwy butchers, High Street

Famous butchers with local meats, cheeses and delicatessen items - perfect for a picnic!

e. Vinomondo, High Street

This shop is a treasure trove of Welsh beer, gin and wine (they also sell products not from Wales!). You'll find lots made right here in and around Snowdonia - the staff are super friendly and helpful so do ask for advice! They have a 'secret' garden to sit in at the back ;-)

f. The Albion Ale House, Upper Gate Street

Run by a co-operative of four local breweries, the Albion sells a very wide range of frequently changing local beers and spirits plus nibbles and Edwards pork pies - they don't serve meals.

The building itself is one of the finest examples of a 1920s public house in Britain and the lounge and snug still retain the original fixed seating with push bells used to summon bar tenders. It's one of Bryn's favourite local pubs :-)

g. The Bank of Conwy, Lancaster Square

Housed in a former bank building, this bar serves a good choice of local and international beers. Have a look at the old vault downstairs!

h. Parisella's Ice Cream, High Street and quayside

Ice cream made in Conwy - there is a dazzling array of flavours, and the seagulls aren't as vicious as Llandudno.

i. FIVE, 5 Castle Street

Run by the same family as the fish and chip shop next door, FIVE offers tea, coffee and healthier lunches such as salads and flatbreads.

Indulge in some shopping

Conwy has a wealth of independent shops which are perfect to picking up a gift or souvenir of your visit to North Wales!

The Potters' Gallery, bottom of High Street

The Potters' Gallery specialises exclusively in contemporary ceramics. All the pieces are individually designed and hand made by artist potters who have studios in the region. Several of our breakfast milk jugs and our sheep toast racks are made by artists exhibiting here!

Conwy Art & Soap Bar, High Street by Castle Hotel

Stop here to buy cards, artwork, hand made soap, knitted baby items and soft furnishings produced by local craftspeople.

Baravelli's, Bangor Road, top of Lancaster Square

Award-winning artisan chocolate made on site in the heart of Conwy. Perfect as a treat for yourself, or the special chocoholic in your life!

Siop Wyn, High Street

The perfect place on the High Street to pick up handmade jewellery, Welsh and English cards, homeware and unique gifts.

Dylans, High Street (9)

Foodie 'general store' - a great place to stock up on products produced in North Wales.

See guide for key to places of interest / cycles etc.

