

www.brooklandtravel.com
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TOURS THROUGH TIME

A RANGE OF FULLY GUIDED HISTORICAL TOURS

Great Castles of North Wales

12/15 June 2010 (3 nights)
from The Castle Hotel, Conwy ****



The walled city of **Conwy**, dominated by its mighty castle and guarded by no less than 22 towers, is the perfect location for exploring historic North Wales. Mighty **Caernarfon** is possibly the most famous of Welsh castles – its sheer scale and commanding presence set it apart from the rest. **Beaumaris Castle** on the Island of Anglesey is endlessly fascinating with no less than four successive lines of fortifications. **Conwy, Caernarfon and Beaumaris Castles are UNESCO World Heritage Sites.** On the eastern tip of Anglesey in a tranquil location is **Penmon Priory**, the site of a monastery dating back to the time of St Seiroil.

This tour will include a scenic drive through the **Snowdonia National Park**, a tour of **Chester's magnificent cathedral** and a walking tour of this historic city.

Itinerary at a glance

Day 1 – Saturday 12 th June	Day 2 – Sunday 13 th June	Day 3 – Monday 14 th June	Day 4 – Tuesday 15 th June
<p>Independent travel and check-in to the hotel from 14.00 hrs.</p> <p>16:00 hrs: Optional coach transfer from Chester Rail Station.</p> <p>19.00hrs: Welcome Reception and introduction to the tour with your guide.</p> <p>19.30hrs: Dinner.</p>	<p>Breakfast.</p> <p>Join your guide for a walking tour of the town, followed by a visit to Conwy Castle.</p> <p>The tour will continue with a visit to Plas Mwar Elizabethan Town House. Free time for lunch.</p> <p>After lunch we depart by coach for Anglesey and Beaumaris Castle.</p> <p>Return to the hotel for a leisurely evening and dinner.</p>	<p>Breakfast.</p> <p>Depart for Penrhyn Castle for a private tour. There will also be time for lunch and to explore the grounds and gardens.</p> <p>The tour will continue with a visit to Caernarfon Castle.</p> <p>Following this, there will be a scenic drive through Snowdonia National Park.</p> <p>Return to the hotel for a leisurely evening and dinner.</p>	<p>Breakfast.</p> <p>Check-out of rooms with secure storage available for luggage.</p> <p>Depart for Chester for a visit to the cathedral, followed by a guided tour of the city to see the <i>city rows</i>.</p> <p>Free time for independent sightseeing and lunch.</p> <p>15.30hrs: Transfer to Chester Rail Station / Return to the hotel and depart at leisure.</p>

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Full Itinerary

Day 1 It is possible to travel to the hotel independently and check in mid afternoon on **Saturday**. The alternative is to join a coach transfer from Chester Railway Station at 16.00hrs. This 3-night short break commences on Saturday evening with a welcome reception and an introduction to the tour by tour leader, Julian Humphrys. After this, dinner is served in the hotel restaurant.

Day 2 On **Sunday** morning a full Welsh breakfast is served and after this, we join Julian to explore historic Conwy, a classic walled town. Its circuit of walls, over 3/4-mile long and guarded by no less than 22 towers, is one of the finest in the world. Our first visit is to the dark stoned fortress sitting on a rock above the Conway Estuary – **Conwy Castle**. This is considered as the most magnificent of Edward I's Welsh *iron ring* castles, built to contain the Welsh. Its soaring curtain walls and 8 huge round towers give the castle an intimidating presence. The views from the battlements are breathtaking. Here we can look down upon the roofless shell of the 125ft Great Hall and also out towards the mountains, the sea and the ring of Conwy's town walls. It is no wonder that Conwy Castle is a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**.

We will visit **Plas Mawr Elizabethan Town House**, a fine property that dominates the town with its gatehouse, stepped gables and lookout tower. It has been almost entirely restored and is superbly presented with fine interiors that reflect the wealth and influence of Tudor gentry in Wales.

Within Conwy itself, **Aberconwy House** in Castle Street is the only medieval merchant's house which survived the city's turbulent history. The furnished rooms and audio visual presentation show daily life from different periods of history. Owned by the **National Trust**, this small property can only hold up to 25 visitors at a time and therefore we suggest a visit later in the morning when there is free time for lunch and refreshments.

Later we drive across the **Thomas Telford's Menai Bridge** to the **Island of Anglesey** to visit **Beaumaris Castle**, a great unfinished masterpiece. It was another of Edward I's *iron ring* castles and an attempt to stamp his authority on the Welsh. However, money and supplies were exhausted before the fortifications reached their full height. In architectural terms, Beaumaris is in fact the most technically perfect castle with perfectly symmetrical concentric *walls within walls* design. It was considered *state of the art* for the late 13th century; and today its status is that of a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**.

A short drive away is the ruined monastery at **Penmon** and the priory church which was enlarged and still remains in use today. There is a Holy well, a spring that emerges from a cliff behind the church. At the end of the afternoon, we return to Conwy, where dinner is served in the hotel restaurant.

Day 3 After breakfast on **Monday**, we travel to **Penrhyn Castle** near Bangor. Here we will visit and tour the castle prior to it opening to the public. This enormous 19th century *neo* Norman castle sits between Snowdonia and the Menai Straits and contains one of the finest art collections in Wales. We can explore the workrooms in the servant's area, the lavishly furnished staterooms and the restored kitchens. The 60 acres of grounds include parkland, an exotic tree and shrub collection and a Victorian walled garden. Lunch can be taken here before departing for Caernarfon. Mighty Caernarfon is possibly the most famous of Welsh Castles and yet another castle built by **Edward I**. **Caernarfon Castle**, another UNESCO World Heritage Site, was constructed not only as a military stronghold but as a seat of government and a royal palace. It dominates the walled town, also founded by Edward I, and it was here that the first English Prince of Wales was born in 1284. In 1969 it was the setting for the investiture of **Prince Charles as Prince of Wales**.

Cont/...

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After exploring Caernarfon, we return to Conwy with a scenic drive through the Snowdonia National Park. Dinner is served at the hotel during the evening.

Day 4 After breakfast on **Tuesday** morning, we check out of our hotel rooms and luggage can be safely stored for those returning to Conwy at the end of the afternoon's touring. We then drive to **Chester**, a city of historic, cultural and architectural importance. Founded by the Romans, Chester has many fascinating chapters of history through the ages.

We will tour **Chester Cathedral**, a Grade I listed building, where all the major styles of English medieval architecture from Norman to Perpendicular are represented. There will be an opportunity to join Julian for a guided city walk and to see **The Chester Rows** as well as some free time for lunch and independent sightseeing.

The coach will return to Conwy via Chester Rail Station.

Tour Cost / Overleaf

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Tour Cost

English Heritage Member* per person	£488
Non member per person	£499
Single supplement	£30
Non-Refundable Deposit per person	£100

* Please note that there is a reciprocal arrangement between English Heritage and CADW, subject to you having English Heritage membership for a least one year. If you are a relatively new member of English Heritage, please contact us to see whether any discount will be applicable at the time of travel.

Brookland Travel reserves the right to alter the itinerary should it be necessary due to conditions beyond their control. Every effort will be made to maintain the spirit of the theme.

Included

- Coach transfers from Chester Rail Station, if required*
- Three night's en-suite accommodation at the 4* Castle Hotel, Conwy
- Full Welsh breakfast and a 3-course dinner with coffee each evening
- Executive coaching, as per the itinerary
- The services of a professional tour leader, historian and author – Julian Humphrys
- Welcome reception drink on the first evening
- Entry to all properties mentioned in the programme (except Aberconwy House/National Trust) and tours/walking tours as described

Not included

- Travel Insurance (strongly recommended)
- Refreshments and lunches, although suitable stops are included

NB: This tour does involve a fair amount of gentle walking.

Joining times at Chester Rail Station

There is a direct service from London Euston to Chester, which takes just over 2 hours. There will be a transfer at 16:00 hrs on Saturday 12th June 2010 and a return to Chester Rail Station at 15:30 hrs on Tuesday 15th June 2010.

How to Book You can visit the website and the "Contact Us" page to make a provisional booking. Alternatively, please ring the office between 9.00am-5.00pm (Monday-Friday). A non-refundable deposit of £100 is required at the time of booking, unless you are booking less than 8 weeks before departure. In this case, full payment of the tour is required.

Further Information

If you have any questions about the tour, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Hotel Information / Overleaf

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Your Accommodation



The Castle Hotel, Conwy ****

High Street
Conwy
LL32 8DB

T: 01492 582800
F: 01492 582300
E: mail@castlewales.co.uk

www.castlewales.co.uk

The Castle Hotel, an old coaching inn, stands on the site of a Cistercian Abbey and used to consist of 2 famous hostelries, The Castle and the 15th century King's Head. The Castle was by far the larger and in Victorian times has had an attractive face-lift of local granite and Ruabon brick and is now one of Conwy's most photographed buildings.

The hotel has a fascinating past and has made an important contribution to Conwy's history, playing host to many famous people, such as Telford, Stephenson, Wordsworth and the Queen of Romania, who lunched in the restaurant whilst visiting Llandudno. One of the main reasons so many guests return to The Castle is because of the food. Graham Tinsley, head chef and partner, is the manager of the Welsh Culinary Team and is passionate about his food!

All bedrooms are en-suite.

Extra nights may be available, on request. Please enquire at the time of booking, as we may be able to secure a competitive rate for you.

Directions

Conwy is located approx. 46 miles west of Chester.

From the A55 travelling west: From Chester, follow the A55 towards Bangor. After passing Colwyn Bay leave the A55 at Junction 18 taking the A546 signposted Llandudno. At the first roundabout, with Tesco on your left, go straight on. At the second roundabout, take the first exit, signposted A547 Conwy. After crossing the bridge and with the castle on the left, you enter Conwy. At the mini roundabout the one-way system obliges you to take the left fork. Follow this road to a gateway in the town wall. After passing through the gateway turn immediately right, and follow this one-way street, which takes you back into the town. Just before the pedestrian crossing, turn right into **High Street**. The hotel is on the left.