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Sir Gâr

darganfodsirgar.com

This is
Carmarthenshire

discovercarmarthenshire.com

1
WEEK : gentle

Leisurely Leg-stretch

Pick from a menu of circuits of around 30 miles, providing tasters of Carmarthenshire's diverse landscapes on a moderate week of road roaming.

Most offer the option of extending your route if you feel like testing yourself – and there's plenty to see and do (and eat and drink) on days off. We've suggested a selection that showcases the best of the county, along with practical details to help you plan a varied week's break, including links to maps and altitude charts as well as accommodation and sightseeing possibilities.

Duration: One week
Bases: Newcastle Emlyn, Llanidloes, Llandeilo, Llandovery

Explore West Carmarthenshire

www.plotaroute.com/route/980710

The short version of the 63-mile West Carmarthenshire Route starts from the lively town of St Clears, where you'll find plenty of places to pick up supplies for the 31-mile loop.

Head north towards Llanwinio Common – and prepare for a climb: though this is far from the most challenging circuit, you'll be ascending around 850 metres over the course of the day.

From up on the common, your route south (and mostly downhill) to Whitland passes a delightful curiosity: Jabajak Vineyard, a tempting place to stop for a sip or something to eat. Whitland itself is home to the Hywel Dda Garden and Interpretive Centre celebrating the achievements of that 10th-century king.

Continue south, climbing to the wonderfully named Red Roses, then bear north-east for the downhill run back to St Clears, dropping in at The Gate to admire local crafts and enjoy a pick-me-up coffee.

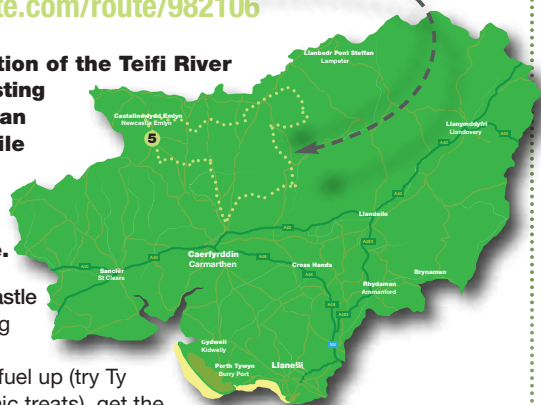


Newcastle Emlyn Circuit

www.plotaroute.com/route/982106

The abridged option of the Teifi River Tour (a more-testing 56-mile route) is an accessible 25-mile adventure in the countryside of north-west Carmarthenshire.

Starting from Newcastle Emlyn, an appealing riverside town with plenty of places to fuel up (try Ty Croeso deli for picnic treats), get the only real climb out of the way at the start of the day on the initial southerly leg. Turning north-west towards Boncath and then north-east back to the Teifi Valley at Cenarth, where you can relax by the waterfalls – perhaps munching some of the local cheese for which this area is renowned. Then it's back along the Teifi to Newcastle, celebrating at the Gwesty'r Newcastle Hotel.



Big Views, Lower Hills

www.plotaroute.com/route/980667

The epic 62-mile Big Hills & Big Views route is among the toughest in Wales – but our 33.5-mile version snips off the most challenging climbs while retaining the loveliest stretches along the Towy and Cothi Valleys.

The colourful hillside market town of Llandeilo is your starting point – and also one of the foodiest destinations in the county: perk up with a coffee and breakfast at The Hangout, pack your panniers with picnic treats from Ginhaus deli, and follow your star north-east to Bethlehem. There's a modest climb approaching Llangadog, but it's only after Llandovery (fortunately replete with fine coffee at Penygawse Tea Rooms), another settlement guarded by a ruined castle, that you turn west and the hills really begin. After Crug-y-bar, the trail veers south and leaves the hilliest sections behind, passing the photogenic ruins of Talley Abbey en route back to Llandeilo.

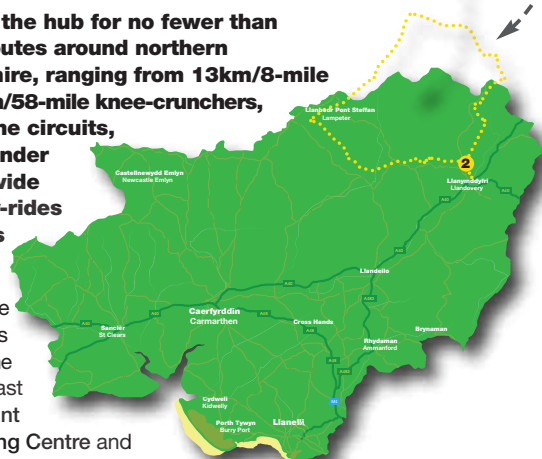


Around Llandovery

www.discovercarmarthenshire.com/explore/road-cycling/llandovery-a-cycling-friendly-destination

Llandovery is the hub for no fewer than 12 mapped routes around northern Carmarthenshire, ranging from 13km/8-mile glides to 93km/58-mile knee-crunchers, but three of the circuits, each a little under 30-miles, provide moderate day-rides for our week's break.

First, explore the Brecon Beacons south-east of the town, cycling past the Llandeusant Red Kite Feeding Centre and through the Glasfynedd Forest above the Usk Reservoir. Then circle Mynydd Mallaen, passing near Pumsaint, site of the fascinating Dolaucothi Roman Gold Mines. And complete the set with a dramatic climb onto wild upland – now an MOD range – on Mynydd Epynt east of town



What to see & do

Newcastle Emlyn Castle

Picturesquely tumbledown ruins on a grassy site overlooking a loop on the River Teifi. www.castlewales.com/newcas2.html

Talley Abbey

Picturesque ruins of a 12th-century abbey founded by the monastic order of the Premonstratensians, or White Canons. <https://cadw.gov.wales/visit/places-to-visit/talley-abbey>

Hywel Dda Garden & Interpretive Centre, Whitland

Learn about the achievements of Hywel, 10th-century king of most of Wales, including his groundbreaking legal code. <https://www.hywel-dda.co.uk/history-of-the-centre.htm>

Carreg Cennen (detour)

One of most dramatic ruined castles in Wales, 6km east of Fairfach. <https://cadw.gov.wales/visit/places-to-visit/carreg-cennen>

The Gate Craft Centre, St Clears

Gallery and artist studios housed in a former mill, with a popular café. www.discovercarmarthenshire.com/places/whitland-st-clears-the-west/the-gate/

Dolaucothi Gold Mines, Pumsaint (detour)

Fascinating gold mines dating from the Roman era, 4km north of Crug-y-bar. www.nationaltrust.org.uk/dolaucothi-gold-mines

Dinefwr, Llandeilo (detour)

Beautifully landscaped deer park and ruined castle surrounding 17th-century Newton House with appealing café just outside Llandeilo. www.nationaltrust.org.uk/dinefwr

Llandeusant Red Kite Feeding Station (detour)

Watch dozens of these beautiful birds of prey gather south of Llandovery. www.redkiteswales.co.uk/

How to get there

Llandeilo is 19km/12 miles from the western end of the M4 near Swansea; the A40 links Llandovery, Llandeilo, Carmarthen, St Clears and Whitland. Direct trains on the Heart of Wales line, which carry bikes, link Llandeilo with Llandovery (20 minutes), Swansea (1 hour) and Shrewsbury (3 hours). Whitland is 2.5 hours from Cardiff by direct train.



Cycle repairs

County Cycles, Cross Hands
Excellent, friendly bike shop 20km/12.5 miles east of Carmarthen, housing a wonderful café, Bean on a Bike. www.county-cycles.com

Beiciau Hobbs Bikes, Carmarthen

Handy bike shop offering repairs and services. www.facebook.com/BeiciauHobbsBikes/

