

Title:

Great Days Out and Activities in Pembrokeshire

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Article Body:

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West and south-west Wales is one of the most glorious regions in Britain (if not the world) for its remarkable repertoire of fabulous beaches, magnificent coast and countryside, breathtakingly beautiful hills and mountains, and a huge diversity of wildlife which enriches land, sea and air. And these are just the wonders provided by nature! Add to this great outdoors all the man-made attractions - from shopping to skydiving - and you'd be extremely hard pushed to name an interest, leisure pursuit or holiday activity that isn't well catered for, whatever your particular cup of tea.

So the only question is, where will you find all the things you want see and do for a truly unforgettable holiday or short break? This brief FBM Holidays guide to great days out will help you find your way.

Pembrokeshire's great outdoors provides the perfect environment for a whole spectrum of land-based and water-based activities and high adventure. It's one of the many reasons why thousands of visitors are drawn to the county and national park every year - and why they keep coming back for more!

Adventure & watersports. If thrills and spills are your idea of a great holiday, Pembrokeshire is the place for you. There are several centres specialising in activities such as coasteering, abseiling, assault courses, climbing and a whole variety of watersports - bodyboarding, canoeing, kayaking, sailing, scuba diving, surfing, windsurfing, kitesurfing to name a few - and first-class

instruction by qualified professionals and the provision of essential equipment and safety gear is all part of the package. These specialist and experienced centres include TYF No Limits, Pembrokeshire Activity Centre, Sealyham Activity Centre, Dale Sailing and a number of surfing shops and schools such as Newsurf. The best surfing beaches are Whitesands (St David's), Newgale and wild Freshwater West, the latter boasting the biggest and most consistent break in Wales but subject to strong rip currents, so take care. Other exciting activities you can enjoy in Pembrokeshire include horseriding, karting and quad biking - not to mention the excellent facilities of venues such as Tenby Leisure Centre. And for yet more sea-based adventure see also wildlife & the environment.

Cycling and mountain biking. There are many opportunities to enjoy fun and action on two wheels - from circular routes in the north of the county based around Cardigan to the 7-mile challenge encompassing the reservoir at Llys-y-Fran Country Park to established cycling centres including Newport in the north and Saundersfoot in the south. The traffic-free Brunel cycle trail, along the route of the old railway line between Neyland and Johnston, now goes all the way to Haverfordwest. The availability of showerproof route maps (from tourist information centres) is a bonus. And mountain bikers who are up for it can assure themselves of high excitement - such as the off-road cliff-top terrain between Stack Rocks and St Govan's Head - by taking advantage of the bike accommodating coastal cruiser bus service. In fact, if you're on wheels, there's something for all the family, including paths suitable for pushchairs and wheelchairs. The big news in 2007 for keen cyclists was the opening of the Sustrans network link between Fishguard and Cardigan, connecting the round-Pembrokeshire Celtic Trail and the Lon Cambria route from Aberystwyth to Shrewsbury.

Fishing. As well as sea angling from harbour, beach, rocks or boat, there's freshwater fishing along the Teifi and at locations such as the reservoir at Llys-y-Fran Country Park, and coarse fishing at a number of venues throughout the county, including beautiful Bosherton lily ponds on the south coast.

Golf. The choice of 8 challenging courses:

Haverfordwest (parkland, with views of the Preseli Hills), Milford Haven (views over the busy waterway), Newport (currently 9 holes but soon to be upgraded to 18, spectacular coastal views), Priskilly (family-run parkland course), South Pembrokeshire (close to the ferry terminal at Pembroke Dock, panoramic views), St David's (overlooking the superb Whitesands Blue Flag beach), Tenby Golf Club (the famous links course of the oldest golf club in Wales, playable all year round) and Trefloyne (a much more recent parkland course very close to Tenby).

Arts & crafts

Pembrokeshire's natural attractions have always proven an irresistible draw to people who work in virtually any field of creativity, from artists and craftspeople to writers, musicians and photographers. It has even been said that there are more artists per acre living in Pembrokeshire than anywhere else in the UK. This rich tradition of the arts is evident in the wealth of galleries, studios and workshops open to visitors right across the county. Such attractions include working woollen mills and industries producing items as varied as jewellery, garments, knitwear, furniture, carpets, needlecraft, Caldey Island perfumes, Welsh crystal, lovespoons, candles, glassware, slate creations, pottery and much more. An Art & Craft Guide, available from tourist information centres, will help you discover them all.

Best beaches

If Pembrokeshire is known for one thing above all others, it has to be the incredible number of fabulous sandy beaches contained within such a compact corner of Britain's west coast. In 2007 the county picked up no fewer than 57 awards for the quality of its beaches and water - including 11 international Blue Flag Awards, the highest accolade and standard throughout Europe. So where are the best beaches in Pembrokeshire? The simple answer is anywhere that takes your fancy - be it the south, the west or the north coast. But if you want names, the Blue Flag beaches are (north) Poppit Sands and Whitesands; (west) Newgale, Broad Haven and Dale; and (south) Lydstep Haven, Tenby South, Tenby Castle, Tenby North, Saundersfoot and Amroth. So how many Pembrokeshire beaches are there in total? A staggering 59!

Boat trips

From shoreline and island pleasure cruises to exciting wildlife expeditions to high-speed adventure in rigid inflatables, the dramatic Pembrokeshire coastline provides endless opportunities for exploring this wild corner of Wales from the fascinating perspective of the sea. One of the most popular of all boat trips is the short (20-minute) crossing from Tenby to Caldey Island - the home of a small community of Cistercian monks. This tranquil and beautiful sanctuary has a variety of attractions, from the sandy beach to a chocolate factory, shops, walks, tea gardens and the monastery itself.

Castles & historic sites

Pembrokeshire is the home of the Tudor dynasty: Henry VII was born in Pembroke Castle and became the first Welshman to claim the English crown when he defeated Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth Field in 1485. Today the castle is well preserved and is one of many castles and other popular historic (and prehistoric) attractions and monuments in the county (listed here from A-Z). Both Tenby and Pembroke also boast the distinction of being medieval walled towns.

Carew Castle & Tidal Mill. The place where the last great medieval jousting tournament in Wales was held, five centuries ago, Carew Castle enjoys a picturesque waterside setting, Today it is the scene for regular events organised by the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority, who manage the site. A further attraction here is an 11th-century Celtic cross - one of the finest examples in Wales. The tidal mill is the only restored example of its kind in the principality boasting all of the original machinery.