

## Holiday guide to the Llŷn peninsula, north Wales



A haven for surfers and adventurers, 'a timeless island feel pervades this often-overlooked peninsula'. Writers of the new *Wild Guide Wales* select the best coves and beaches, places to eat and seasonal campsites

**W**ith tiny lanes lined with wildflowers leading to empty coves and rugged cliffs, this magical, often-overlooked peninsula has a timeless island feel - some say the Llŷn is like Cornwall 50 years ago. Welsh is spoken more often than not, and sacred places abound. But it's not stuck in the past: there's a strong surf culture around Porth Neigwl (Hell's Mouth), and you can taste the beginning of a good-food revolution.

The coast starts in rugged fashion on the north side with the towering peak of Yr Eifl, home of Tre'r Ceir, an iron age settlement with some of Wales's best roundhouse remains. To the south, the coast is gentler - a string of pearly coves with tiny seasonal campsites. And at the distant tip sits Bardsey Island, glimmering across the tidal waters.



There's been a church here for 1,500 years, and it was once as sacred as Iona in Scotland or Lindisfarne in Northumberland. Take a boat trip from Porth Meudwy to see its Manx shearwater colonies. Beyond charming Aberdaron, a leafy path along a stream leads to the hidden bay of Porth Ysgo, one of the most beautiful spots on this coast. Here are old mine workings overgrown with ragwort and bindweed, and ruined engine houses on the grassy clifftops. Beyond is Porth Neigwl, the wildest beach on the peninsula, and a serene spot for building driftwood fires and bivvying under the stars.

### BEACHES Ynys Fawr and Traeth Yr Eifl, Trefor



▲ Photograph: Daniel Start

Wonderful views of the peaks of Yr Eifl greet those who travel this coast. A very tricky scramble down a gully leads to an isolated shingle cove with the huge pyramid rock of Ynys Fawr. Continue on to the main beach below Yr Eifl.

● *Park at Trefor quay and follow the coast path west ¼ mile past the old pier; after ½ mile a faint path zigzags down the side of the narrow, grassy gully on the far side of a cove (tricky slab at bottom, be careful).*

### Borth Wen and Porthdinllaen



▲ Photograph: Daniel Start

The main Porthdinllaen beach, with the popular *Ty Coch Inn* right on the sand - perfect for a pint and a bowl of chips while the kids play on the beach - is superb but also try the quiet shingle beach on the south-western edge of the peninsula, Borth Wen. The coastal flowers in summer are a delight. Walk to the end of the headland for the lifeboat station in a cove and a chance to see seals.

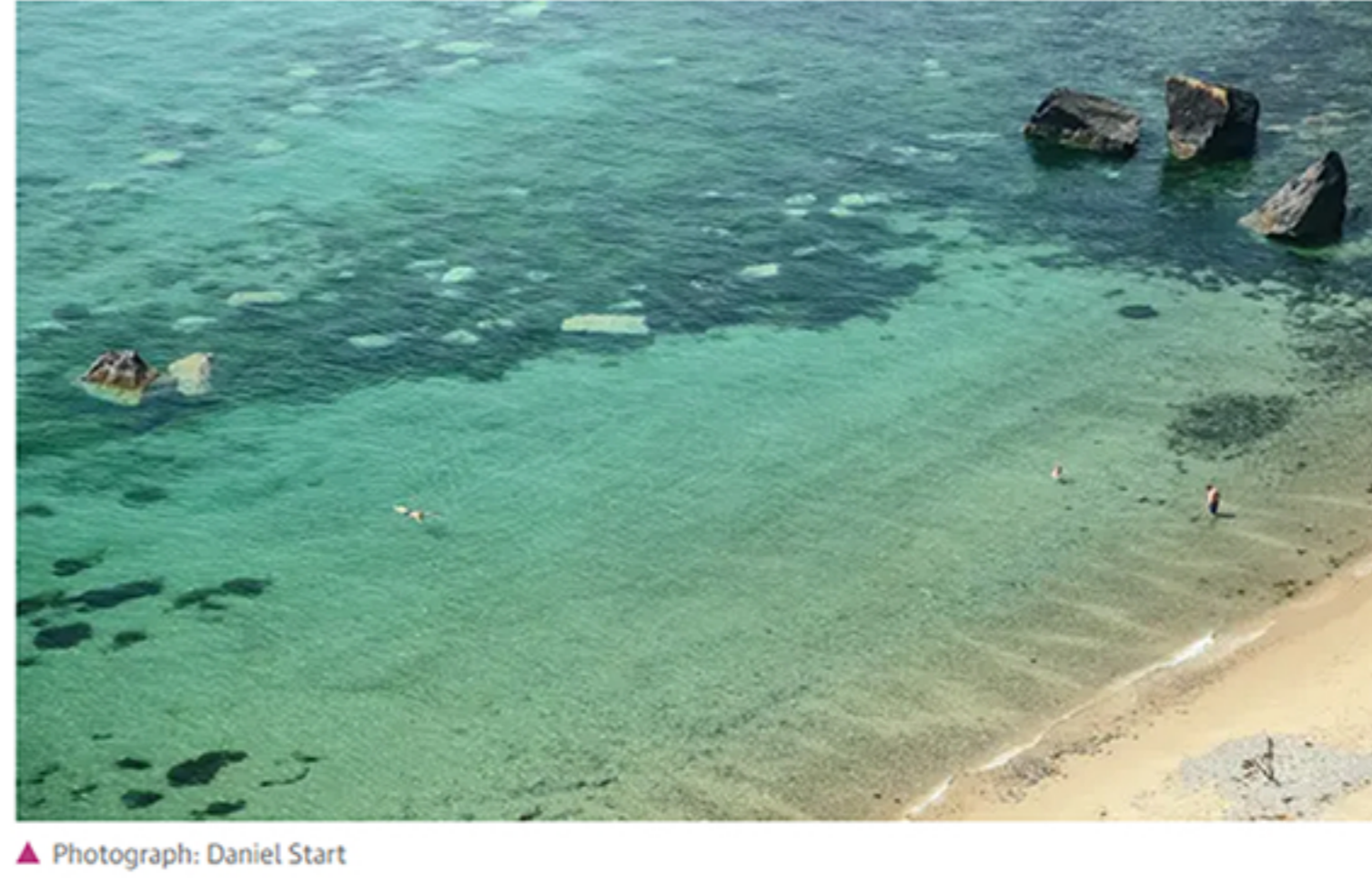
### Porth Iago, Rhydlios



▲ Photograph: Daniel Start

One of the best little beaches on the Llŷn, this one is west-facing and sheltered, with golden sands, clear waters and an ancient hillfort above. You can even *wild camp here: it's included in the parking fee*. The rocks are a good place for bass fishing - we barbecued one, caught minutes before, and scented it with wild thyme.

### Porth Ysgo, Llanfaelrhys



▲ Photograph: Daniel Start

This remote sand and shingle beach lies below a dramatic section of coast, rich in serpentine and gabbro volcanic rock, green-black and crystalline. It's reached via a secret valley with intriguing mine ruins (wheelhouse, tunnels). At high tide an offshore rock, once used to moor ships, is fine to dive from.

### Whistling Sands and Lookout



▲ Photograph: Alamy

Said to whistle in certain winds, popular white-sand bay Porth Oer has a *National Trust shop and large car park*. Walk south along the coast path to sea caves and inland to the ruins of a lookout tower on Mynydd Carreg.

### WHERE TO EAT

#### Mickey's Boatyard & Beach Cafe, Abersoch

Right by the water on the Mearns beach in Bwlchtocyn, this friendly cafe with lots of outdoor seating serves bacon baps, sandwiches, ice-cream and good coffee from its boatyard home.

● [mickeysboatyard.co.uk](http://mickeysboatyard.co.uk)

#### Plas Glyn y Weddow, Llanbedrog



▲ Photograph: Wolfgang Sauber

On the coast path just behind Llanbedrog beach, this gothic mansion, now an art gallery, heritage centre and cafe, serves Llŷn cheeses and beef from the Menai Straits, plus homemade cakes and teas. There are also exhibitions, plays and kids' holiday messy-art sessions, and don't miss a wander around the lovely woodland.

● [oriel.org.uk](http://oriel.org.uk)

#### Y Gegin Fawr, Aberdaron

This cafe is in a white cottage that once served pilgrims to Bardsey Island. Don't miss St Hywyn's seaside church, which pilgrims visited en route - and still do today. The cafe sells delicious, local sweet crab and generous slices of homemade *bara brith* (Welsh tea loaf).

● *On Facebook*

#### Sblash Caban Pysgod/Fish Bar, Aberdaron



A short stroll from the beach at Aberdaron, there's great locally caught fish and chips and crab cakes to eat at a long table inside, outside or on the beach.

● *On Facebook*

#### Caffi Meinir, Nant Gwrtheyrn, Llithfaen



"The Nant" is a former Victorian quarrying village and now home of the National Welsh Language and Heritage Centre, with a museum, holiday cottages and cafe. It's a stunning location, also home to Porth y Nant granite quarry, and free to visit. The cafe serves breakfast and lunch using Llŷn produce. Nearby *Tafarn Y Fic*, a Welsh community pub in Llithfaen, holds Welsh music nights.

● [nantgwrtheyrn.org](http://nantgwrtheyrn.org)