

Visit the Vale

Coast • Countryside • Culture

Places to Visit

For a day, a weekend or longer

Places to Stay

Find just the place you're looking for



www.visitthevale.com

Top 3 reasons to visit the Vale of Glamorgan

Small but perfectly formed, the Vale of Glamorgan – an area roughly **10 miles by 20 miles** – easily rivals much larger and better known destinations.

Let us convince you to visit the Vale, then share your own Top 3 reasons on Facebook [visitthevale](#) and Twitter [@visitthevale](#) 

1. You love the coast

OK, our name may make you think of secluded routes through green hills but that's not the whole picture. The Vale (as it's known locally) is actually a coastal region just west of Cardiff in South Wales, with a 14-mile stretch of Heritage Coast. We've got the most southerly point in Wales, the Wales Coast Path, towering cliffs, golden beaches, remote coves, surf schools, boat cruises and the Victorian seaside resorts of Penarth and Barry Island (of Gavin and Stacey fame).

2. You prefer the countryside

Inland the Vale is an idyllic mix of rolling hills, country lanes, gentle footpaths, well-kept farms, beautiful cottages and fascinating churches and castles. The perfect backdrop for outdoor activities, exploring local legends, enjoying great food and drink. Equally good in the sun or rain (come prepared, that's how the Vale is so green), your experience will always be authentic, not fabricated.

3. You'd like a city break

Choose Cardiff – capital city of Wales – and you'll be right on our doorstep. In under 2 miles you can stroll from Cardiff Bay to Penarth Marina across the Cardiff Bay Barrage. You're missing out if you leave Cardiff without popping over to the Vale: like strawberries and cream, each one tastes better with the other.



Explore it all by following the **ten Vale Trails**, which are marked with this logo throughout the guide. Find out more on page 8.

What will you leave behind?

This is about you **taking a break**. Maybe for just a day. Perhaps a week. Swap your everyday life for some time in the Vale. But remember to leave some things at home.

At home

This is run of the mill. This can wait. Be put on hold. It will still be there when you get back.

Your watch

Your sofa, the Discovery channel and the same four walls

Your hectic lifestyle and how to deal with it

The morning commute

Company car

In the Vale

This is out of the ordinary. It's an opportunity not to be missed. This is for you. Right now.

Revert to your natural clock. Get up when you fancy. Look out the window to see what the weather's doing and take it from there. You might even want to join the early morning **Park Run on Barry Island** every Saturday.

Our great outdoors, especially when viewed from the back of a horse. And you still get to sit down! Try **Liege Manor Farm Equestrian Centre**, **Ogmore Farm Riding Centre**, **Saddle Up in Gileston** or **St Bride's Major Riding & Trekking Centre**.

Get a grip on your golf clubs instead. At the **Vale Resort** golfers will be in the lap of luxury with two championship golf courses and a state-of-the-art golf coaching academy. Our nine other golf courses should keep you occupied but if you fancy playing St Andrews or Pebble Beach, head for the golf simulators at **Cottrell Park Golf Resort**. Need Golfing inspiration? **Contact Vale Golf Breaks**.

It's easy to slow down in the Vale. On **Vale Carriages horse-drawn tours** and **Shans Wales Tours in chauffeur-driven cars** you'll have time to appreciate things.

Indulge your need for speed safely at the **South Wales Karting Centre** near Llantwit Major. Believe us. 45 mph feels very fast when you're only inches from the tarmac.

To find out more visit www.visitthevale.com/Beinspired

At home

Games consoles

Hair straighteners

In the Vale

Do some real (not virtual) running around for a change - it's far more exhilarating. Outdoors try **Taskforce Paintball** or **Laser Tag**, and indoors there's **Quasar**. Children adore picking their own fruit at **Hendrewennol** and the **climbing wall** at **Barry Island**.

Go 'au naturel' for a change. Best 'wind in the hair' activities are cliff-top walks and surfing (if you don't mind your hair getting windy AND wet). **Southerndown Surf School** will help - all you need is a towel.

At home

Sessions on that exercise bike in the gym

The good old internet

A tight budget

In the Vale

On a mountain bike it's not just your legs that are moving, it's the scenery. Ask **Capital Adventure Wales** and they'll show you the best views, or the shortest climbs, or even the mainly downhill bits. For a sea breeze try the new **National Cycle Network Route 88** which links the Vale with Cardiff Bay.

May we suggest some other types of nets for you to try. Landing nets come in very handy at **Dyffryn Springs Fishery**, **Hazel Court Ponds**, **Seven Oaks Fishery** and **Warren Mill Farm Fishery**. **Barry Island** has volleyball nets on the beach throughout the summer, and they're free to use!

Walking's free. Try our spectacular section of the **Wales Coast Path** or the series of ten **Vale Trails**. There are even free guided walks in the annual **Vale of Glamorgan Walking Festival**.

To find out more visit www.visitthevale.com/Beinspired



Walkers' secret paradise

Not as well-known as Wales' highest peaks or some coastal counties, the Vale attracts walkers who are looking for a varied selection of routes away from the crowds. There's more chance of getting held up by the breathtaking beauty and wealth of wildlife than by an amble of walkers. Of course, we're extremely proud to be part of the 870-mile Wales Coast Path, the world's longest

continuous coastal walk. If you can't manage all of it, choose the Glamorgan Heritage Coast between Aberthaw and Newton Point, that packs an unexpected variety of views into its 14-mile length. It's an invigorating route that takes in golden beaches, dramatic cliffs, Ogmores Castle and stepping stones, Dr Who filming locations and the Heritage Coast Centre at Dunraven Bay.



Vale Trails

Along the Vale's rugged Glamorgan Heritage Coastline you will discover the last manned lighthouse in Wales. Inland, walk in the footsteps of one of the Vale's most colourful characters on the Iolo Morganwg Heritage Walk. If you dare try the Haunted Field where you'll come across Neolithic Tinkinswood Burial Chamber - its capstone is one of

the largest in Europe. While you're out don't forget to pay a visit to some of the characterful pubs and cosy cafés along the way.

For your copy of the **10 Vale Trails** email tourism@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk, call **01446 704867** or you can download a copy from www.visitthevale.com



Vale Tales

Uncover the **myths and legends** of the Vale of Glamorgan with **Vale Tales - a GPS triggered storytelling app**. There are sad stories, mysterious fables, romantic and historical tales, all brought to life by **Iolo Morganwg**, the Welsh master of the tall tale.

Offering a unique, digital experience, you can listen to the many and varied stories of the area while exploring and experiencing the beauty of the Vale of Glamorgan.



Download the app today from the AppStore or Google Play and start exploring.

Full details are available at www.visitthevale.com/valetales

Have you heard the tale of the **white lady of St Athan** who was buried up to her neck by her husband for being unfaithful?

Or the legend about the **Captain's wife from Sully**, whose dead body was kept in a box that was mistaken for treasure and stolen.

Did you know that **Big Ben**, was probably named after **Benjamin Hall**, a very tall resident of Hensol Castle. He oversaw the building of Westminster and the installation of the bell within the clock tower.

See the Glamorgan Heritage Coast come to life!

The Glamorgan Heritage Coast, extending westwards from Aberthaw to Newton Point just over the **River Ogmore** at Ogmore-by-Sea, has special conservation status. This 14-mile stretch of coastline is exceptionally rich in geological features and wildlife, and boasts the southernmost point of mainland Wales at Breaksea Point, near Gileston. A good starting point is the Heritage Coast Centre at **Dunraven Bay**.

Southerndown: home to the Heritage Coast Rangers who care for this stunning coastline. An extremely knowledgeable and hard working bunch, they'll eagerly tell you about their conservation work and might even point out a fossil or two.

Young Explorers

With the help of our twelve Activity Packs, young explorers can go on a fossil hunt, try the Dunraven quiz, and discover the dastardly deeds of **Mat of the Iron Hand**. Discover all you need to know about this unique coastline on the Llantwit Major and Glamorgan Heritage Coast page on www.visitthevale.com

Bringing History to Life

See the coast through different eyes with the Glamorgan Heritage Coast **Augmented Reality App** which brings history to life. Simply download the app and find the trigger posts at the three locations.

Near Dunraven Bay, Southerndown, you can explore Dunraven **Iron Age hill fort** and see **Dunraven Castle** rise from the ruins, while at **Nash Point Lighthouse** the ill-fated Frolic sails past.

Discover all you need to know about this unique coastline at www.visitthevale.com/glamorganheritagecoast



From every angle

Part of the 870-mile Wales Coast Path, our coastline has all the dramatic beauty you'd expect, without the crowds. From the viewing platform at **Penarth Head** you'll see the bright lights of **Cardiff Bay** and the tiny islands of **Flat Holm** (in Wales) and **Steep Holm** (in England) against the backdrop of the Somerset and Devon coast. It was at nearby **Lavernock Point**, in 1897, that Marconi received the first radio transmission across water from Flat Holm island.

Take a boat from **Penarth Pier** to truly appreciate this magnificent coast. Trips run at various times throughout the year aboard the paddle steamer Waverley and the Balmoral pleasure cruiser.

For a drive with a difference along the coast, choose Vale Carriages horse-drawn tours. The slow pace helps you to appreciate your surroundings, as well as the splendid carriage and Wendy, the gentlest of horses. A popular tour takes you westward to the picturesque setting of **Ogmore Castle** and the stepping stones across the Ogmore river.



Nash Point Lighthouse



This important feature on our coastline has guided mariners along the Bristol Channel since 1832. It was built following the loss of around 80 lives when The Frolic was wrecked on the treacherous Nash Sands.

Automated in 1998, **Nash Point** was the last manned lighthouse in Wales and the first in Britain to be licensed as a venue for weddings and civil partnership ceremonies. Now open on selected days, you can climb to the top and admire the views, hear the extremely loud fog horn, and, if you're smitten, book a stay in the former keepers' cottages.

www.nashpoint.co.uk

Beach guide

www.visitthevale.com

For beach locations please refer to the map at the back of this guide.

Know the risks.
Stay safe see
www.rnli.org

Map Ref.
Car park
Toilets S=seasonal only
Disabled facilities incl. RADAR key toilets
Refreshments S=seasonal only
Lifeguards during summer season
Dogs allowed all year
No dogs during 1 May-30 Sept.

1 Ogmores-by-Sea	Wide sand and pebble beach. Access dependent on the tide level of the Ogmores river. Great for walkers.		A3	●	●	●	S	●	●	
2 Dunraven Bay, Southerndown	Depending on the tide, at most times it's a sand and pebble bay with rock pools connected to the Wales Coast Path. Popular for surfing and kayaking.	Recently awarded a Seaside award by Keep Wales Tidy	B4	●	●	●	S	●		●
3 Cwm Nash, also known as Monknash	Following a picturesque walk along a tree lined track, the beach at Cwm Nash, also known as Monknash, is a beautiful beach with a dramatic cliff backdrop. When the tide is out, rock platforms create gushing waterfalls that lead to stunning golden sands.								●	
4 Nash Point, Marcross	Rocky shore with rugged cliffs and the lighthouse nearby. Spectacular geology.		C5	●	S		S		●	
5 Cwm Colhuw, Llantwit Major	Rock pools and sand linked to the Wales Coast Path. Amazing clifftop views.		D5	●	●	●	●	●		●
6 Summerhouse Point, Boverton	Quiet, flat rock beach. Perfect for walking and angling.		D5						●	
7 The Leys, Aberthaw	One of South Wales' best shore angling beaches. Very rocky. Next to Aberthaw Power Station.		E6	●					●	
8 Fontygary Bay, Rhoose	Sheltered beach backed by cliffs. Mixture of sand, pebbles and rock pools.		F6	●					●	
9 Porthkerry, Barry	Wide pebble beach adjoining Porthkerry Country Park, with its adventure playground, wooded nature trails and pitch & putt. A great family day out.		G6	●	●	●	●		●	
10 Cold Knap, Barry	Wide pebble beach with coastal walks nearby. Conditions are perfect for windsurfing and sea angling.	Recently awarded a Seaside award by Keep Wales Tidy	G6	●	●	●	●			●
11 Whitmore Bay, Barry Island	Traditional seaside resort with wide sandy beach, cafés, shops and attractions, beach huts, Beach wheelchairs to hire (free of charge) anytime.	Recently awarded a Blue Flag Beach award by Keep Wales Tidy	H6	●	●	●	●	●		●
12 Jackson's Bay, Barry Island	Small sandy bay linked by a footpath to Whitmore Bay.	Recently awarded a Seaside award by Keep Wales Tidy	H6	●	S				●	
13 St Mary's Well Bay, near Penarth	Small sandy beach. Great for fossil hunting and views to Flat Holm and Steep Holm islands.		I5	●					●	
14 Penarth Seafront	Great for relaxing in the seafront gardens, visiting the pier and strolling along the esplanade, with steps leading to the pebble and shingle beach.		J4	●	●	●	●			●



That's the way to do it!



Barry Island and Penarth, the Vale's two coastal resorts, offer a happy blend of exciting new developments and the best seaside traditions.

Barry Island

Famed in recent years as the location for **BBC TV's sitcom Gavin and Stacey**, Barry Island has attracted visitors since the 1870s and the appeal of its golden beaches, cafés and family amusements is stronger than ever. **Barry Island Pleasure Park**, now under new ownership, attracts thousands of visitors looking for the thrill of the fairground. The addition of new beach huts, a climbing wall, mist feature, landscaped gardens and a covered events amphitheatre on the Eastern Promenade of **Whitmore Bay** extends the resort along the full length of the beach and adds to its year-round appeal for families of all ages.

'Small businesses, linked by a real sense of camaraderie, form the backbone of Barry Island – sometimes nicknamed Barrybados! Cosmopolitan cafés now sit alongside traditional Fish & Chip shops offering visitors a choice to suit all, all the while overlooking the best view imaginable of Whitmore Bay, recently awarded the Blue Flag Beach award. And with most cafés welcoming our four legged friends, it really is a day out the whole family can enjoy.'

For a full list of what you'll find here and download the Barry Island visitor guide from www.visitthevale.com/barryisland



Hire a Beach Hut
Book online
www.visitthevale.com
Advance Bookings
01446 700 111



Download
town guides from
www.visitthevale.com

Penarth

Penarth's Victorian and Edwardian founders created an elegant resort with fine public buildings and ornate houses. Its restored Art Deco Pier, complete with art gallery and café is a popular spot for a stroll and a port of call for the Balmoral Pleasure Cruiser.

In recent years, Penarth has become a food lover's dream with an array of splendid restaurants and cafés on offer including Michelin starred chef **James Sommerin's** restaurant on the iconic **Esplanade** offering panoramic vistas out over the Severn Estuary.

Known as the **'Garden by the Sea'**, Penarth boasts a number of splendid parks that link the seafront to the quirky independent shops in the tree-lined town centre and is just a stone's throw from Cardiff Bay. Take a water taxi from **Penarth Marina** or walk, cycle or catch a land-train across the Barrage which forms part of the **Wales Coast Path**.

To learn more about this stylish town on the edge of the city of Cardiff, download the Penarth visitor guide from www.visitthevale.com/penarth



Download town guides from www.visitthevale.com



How **green** is my Vale?

Find your perfect outdoor setting at one of these **three** beautiful locations, where there's every shade of green you can imagine.

Old Beaupre Castle is just one of our CADW sites in the Vale.
www.cadw.gov.wales

Porthkerry Country Park, near Barry

The best of both worlds – coast and countryside:
220 acres of **woods and meadowland** in a sheltered valley leading to a **pebble beach and spectacular cliffs**. It's a must-visit location where you'll always find space.

www.visitthevale.com

If you like...

Family activities

Walking

Photography

Heritage

You'll enjoy...

- the nature trails, events, play area and football/cricket/rounders on the huge main field
- the variety – from spring walks through bluebell woods to winter walks along the beach
- capturing the coastline, the viaduct, the sunlight through the trees
- the 19th century railway viaduct with 16 arches which spans the western end of the park



Dyffryn House & Gardens



Cosmeston Lakes Country Park & Medieval Village



Porthkerry Country Park

Cosmeston Lakes Country Park & Medieval Village, near Penarth

With Local Nature Reserve status, these former tips and quarries now provide a rich habitat for wildlife and a perfect family day out, just a mile from Penarth. The two large lakes and several smaller ponds are **surrounded by woodlands and wildflower meadows**, with gravel paths and wooden boardwalks for easy access. The medieval village was reconstructed from the remains of a real village unearthed during excavations on the site, and was used as a location for filming the BBC TV series *Merlin*.

www.visitthevale.com

now a member of the Federation of Welsh Museums



Dyffryn House & Gardens.

St. Nicholas

Now managed by the National Trust, Dyffryn House was built in 1893 by wealthy coal magnate John Cory. Significant parts of the ground and first floors are open to the public. The **Grade I listed Edwardian gardens**, covering 55 acres, were designed by eminent landscape architect Thomas Mawson in collaboration with John Cory's son, Reginald, a leading figure in the Royal Horticultural Society.

www.nationaltrust.org.uk

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| If you like... | You'll enjoy... |
| Historic houses | marvelling at the architecture of this mansion |
| Family activities | spotting wildlife and visiting the children's play area |
| Music, theatre and art | the events that are held in the house and the gardens |
| Gardening | the series of intimate outdoor rooms, the arboretum, orchards and kitchen garden |
| Peace and quiet | sitting and admiring the tranquil gardens |



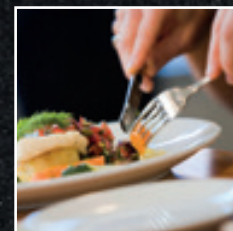
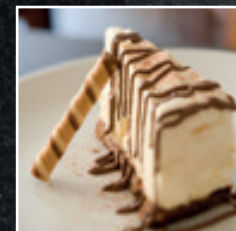
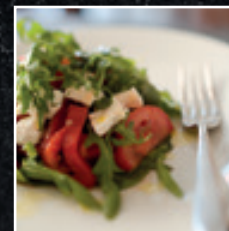
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| If you like... | You'll enjoy... |
| A great value day out | the free admission |
| Walking the dog | the network of tree-lined paths with dedicated dog walking routes |
| Picnics | picnic benches, green spaces to sit and a special BBQ area |
| Bird watching | the bird hide overlooking the western lake |
| Living history | a self-guided audio tour of the medieval village (in English, Welsh, French or German) or a guided tour with a costumed guide (charge payable for both types of tours) |

Eat up

it's good for you

Away from the coast, the geology of this region has produced a rolling, fertile landscape with a mild climate, sometimes known as the 'Garden of Cardiff'. It's not your average garden, though – the Vale's harvest is an absolute feast. Perhaps you'd expect excellent organic meat, eggs, milk, honey and preserves, and places to pick your own fruit and veg. Almost

as abundant are pies, breads, cakes, confectionery, coffee and ice cream. We're experts in producing wines and ales, ciders and perries. And last but not least, you'll find delicious Glamorgan sausages – a local vegetarian recipe using cheese, leeks and breadcrumbs, from a time when meat was scarce. Discover even more at our monthly farmers' markets in Cowbridge and Penarth www.visitthevale.com.





Take it easy, or Slow it down...

In the Vale, we strongly believe in **Slow Tourism**. That means we're encouraging visitors to savour their time with us, explore the area in more depth and ask locals for recommendations. Like all things of quality, our food and drink cannot be rushed. So please slow down: stop for a coffee and drink in the view, meet up with friends for a leisurely lunch or drop everything on a sunny day to enjoy a picnic of local produce.

To find out more visit www.visitthevale.com/Beinspired

Pop up events by Tomos & Lilford.

Street Food Saturdays

For lovers of Beer and street food, you don't want to miss Tomos & Lilford Brewery's ever popular Street Food Saturdays. Held at the brewery tap house, with special guest appearances by street food providers each month it's an event the whole family can enjoy.

www.tomosalilford.com.

Take your time

- Enjoy a Welsh Food Tour: meet local producers and sample their produce, from ice cream and jam to Welsh cakes and wine.
www.lovingwelshfood.uk
- Indulge yourself with a cookery course at Angela Gray's Cookery School.
www.llanerch-vineyard.co.uk
- Check out our CAMRA pubs where you'll find excellent real ales. www.whatpub.com
- Children love exploring the farm whilst picking their own strawberries, raspberries and, well... all kinds of berries at Hendrewennol, one of Wales' oldest pick-your-own fruit farms.
www.hendrewennol.com
- If you love food you won't want to miss the Cowbridge Food and Drink Festival, Beats, Eats and Treats on Barry Island, the Food Court at the Vale Agricultural Show or Penarth Picnic, all regular dates in the diary.
Check out www.visitthevale.com/events

Award winning Bara Brith.

Baked by Mels traditional Welsh fruit cake, Bara Brith won 2 stars in the Great Taste Awards and is freshly baked in small batches in Llantwit Major. Sold far and wide it's gained a reputation as being the best, so be sure to pick it up while you're here or place an order online.

www.barabrith.co



Full of character

Populated since Prehistoric times, the Vale has a rich folklore, dozens of historic sites and some interesting characters - not all of them saints!



St. Illtud

At **Llantwit Major** in around 500 AD St. Illtud founded what is believed to be Britain's oldest seat of learning. The monastic school had over 1,000 pupils including, according to history, **St. David, patron saint of Wales**, and **St. Patrick, patron saint of Ireland**. From here missionaries travelled throughout the Celtic world spreading Christianity.

Built in the 11th century, the current St. Illtud's Church was described by John Wesley as 'the most beautiful church in Wales'. Its Galilee Chapel was recently reconstructed to form a visitor centre which explores the origins of Celtic Christianity and houses the most important collection of Celtic Christian crosses in the UK.

You may also like:

St. Brynach's Church at Llanfrynach and St. Cadoc's Church at Llancafarn

www.visitvalechurches.com



Mr. Iolo Morganwg

Follow in the footsteps of one of the Vale of Glamorgan's most colourful characters on the **Iolo Morganwg** Heritage Walk around Cowbridge (Walk 9 in the Vale Trails series).

Edward Williams (1747-1826) was a prolific poet who is better known by his bardic name. He wrote tirelessly - in both Welsh and English - about his beloved Vale of Glamorgan. A splendid literary forger of poems which he attributed to the 14th century poet **Dafydd ap Gwilym** were not discovered to be forgeries until the 20th century. Part of Iolo's legacy is the **Gorsedd of the Bards** - an integral part of the National Eisteddfod of Wales, the country's largest cultural festival.

You may also like:

the Vale of Glamorgan Walking Festival each Spring, with plenty of **FREE** themed guided walks. www.visitthevale.com



Mr. Neo Lithic

6,000 years ago Neolithic man lived in the village of **Tinkinswood**, near **St. Nicholas**. Today there remains a burial chamber that is over 1,000 years older than Stonehenge! Just as impressive is the size of this stone structure: the capstone measures 8 metres by 4 metres and weighs almost 36 tonnes – the same as an articulated lorry. Excavations in 1914 revealed the bones of over 50 individuals.

You may also like:

St. Lythans burial chamber, near St. Nicholas:
Dunraven Castle hillfort, Southerndown.



Colonel Philip Jones

Fonmon Castle, near Barry, is one of the few medieval castles which is still a home. It was purchased during the English Civil War by **Colonel Philip Jones**, one of Oliver Cromwell's right-hand men, and is still lived in by his descendants today. **Sir Brooke Boothby** and his family open their beautiful home and extensive grounds to visitors every Tuesday and Wednesday from April to September, and host major events throughout the year including the **Vale of Glamorgan Show** in August.

You may also like:

Dyffryn House and Gardens, St Nicholas

Mr. William Randolph Hearst

American newspaper publisher **William Randolph Hearst** bought and renovated 12th century **St Donats Castle** in the 1920s. Guests at his lavish parties at the castle included **Charlie Chaplin**, **Douglas Fairbanks** and **John F. Kennedy**. Since 1962 it has been home to UWC Atlantic College and opens its doors for visitor tours on selected dates. Within the grounds is **St Donats Arts Centre** which presents a lively year-round programme of entertainment.

You may also like:

Memo Arts Centre in Barry, Ffotogallery at Turner House in Penarth and the gallery in Penarth Pier Pavilion



Local treasures... our Vale Ambassadors

Meet a few of the Vale Ambassadors:

Julie, Shan and Ian. Along with 47 others, they turn visits to the Vale into amazing trips that you'll remember long after you return home. A band of cheery individuals, they add value to your day out, either by helping you plan your visit in advance or by meeting up with you while you're here. Get in touch with them by email or phone, and you'll receive suggestions that suit you. They ask nothing in return.

They have a great deal in common: a passion for this beautiful area, time to chat and a desire to ensure that everyone enjoys their visit to the Vale. But they are also strikingly individual: each with particular interests and specialist knowledge, from history and photography, to geology and golf. Some can even help you in French, Spanish or Welsh. Find one who shares your interests at

www.visitthevale.com/valeambassadors

Julie

'I was virtually brought up on the beach, and still spend hours exploring this amazing coastline. Working in the tourism industry, I know a fair bit about the Vale, but if I have a query that I can't answer, I'll be able to find someone who can.'

Favourite spots

Porthkerry Country Park - it's got it all: nature trails, pebble beach, children's playground

Barry Island - a splendidly resurgent seaside resort that retains its traditional charm

Shan

'As an Ambassador I've learnt so much about my local area...from interesting stories about our pretty villages to mind-blowing facts about ancient sites like Tinkinswood Burial Chamber. I'm so proud when I help visitors get excited about these places.'

Favourite spots

Ogmore Castle - an idyllic setting with stepping stones across the Ogmore river, and nearby a pub, horse-riding and golf course

Penarth - for its independent shops, stunning pier and beautiful parks

Ian

'As editor of our local history magazine and chairman of the Llancaiach Society, I'm immersed in the Vale's history much of the time. To be able to gather information and share it with visitors is a great pleasure of mine, along with walking our amazing coastal path.'

Favourite spots

St Cadoc's Church, Llancaiach - where elaborate 15th century wall paintings, of international importance, have been discovered under 27 layers of whitewash

Coastal walks - almost too many to mention but we head to Dunraven and Nash Point over and over again



A tale of two towns

Some say good things come in small packages.

In the case of **Cowbridge** and **Llantwit Major**, we know this old cliché is true.

Download town guides from www.visitthevale.com



Cowbridge

In a nutshell

Called **Y Bont-faen** (the stone bridge) in Welsh, this understated historic market town that has become one of Wales' most fashionable places to see and be seen.

History

Originally a Roman settlement, it is one of very few medieval walled towns in Wales: the South Gate and portions of the walls are still standing. Discover more at the Museum in the Town Hall. You'll get a great view of Cowbridge from the 14th century **St. Quentins Castle**, ½ mile south of the town, which is included in the **Iolo Morganwg Heritage Walk** (Vale Trail 9). A couple of miles away and slightly off the beaten track is **Old Beaupre Castle**, a ruined medieval fortified manor house.

Shopping, eating & drinking

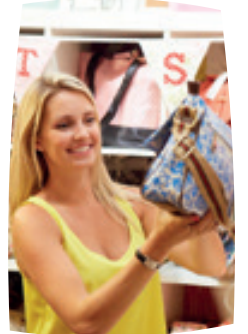
The town boasts dozens of predominantly independent boutiques and restaurants. Some are spread along the high street, others are in the arcades at **Mason's Yard** and **Verity's Court** - where you'll find the **Old Wool Barn art and craft workshops**.

Relaxing

Right in the centre of Cowbridge are two delightful spaces: **Old Hall Gardens** and **Cowbridge Physic Garden**. All the plants in the Physic Garden were to be found in Britain before 1800 and are grouped together according to their uses for cooking, healing and dyeing fabric and wool.

Where?

Inland. Just off the A48. Map reference E3



www.visitthevale.com/cowbridge

Llantwit Major

In a nutshell

The larger of the two towns, it has developed quietly while retaining its meandering medieval streets and fine stone buildings. It's intentionally unassuming, yet with unrivalled provenance as the most important early Christian settlement in Wales, founded by St. Illtud.

History

The town exudes history: Iron Age hill forts, **fine Tudor buildings**, a **Roman villa** and a medieval grange. **St. Illtud** established a church and place of learning here in 500AD. The imposing 11th century church now standing on this site has been called the Westminster Abbey of Wales and contains the UK's finest collection of Celtic carved stones in the Galilee Chapel.

Shopping, eating & drinking

In the maze of narrow streets you'll discover **independent shops**, **friendly cafés** and **historic inns** including the 12th century **Old Swan Inn**.

Relaxing

Enjoy a leisurely stroll around the town following the Blue Plaque trail which takes in 13 noteworthy buildings. A couple of miles outside the town is **St. Donats Arts Centre**, housed in the medieval **Tythe Barn** in the grounds of **UWC Atlantic College**, an international boarding school for students from over 90 countries. Expect a top-notch programme of music, theatre, dance, film and exhibitions, including the biennial **Wales International Storytelling Festival** – Beyond the Border. A short drive takes you to **Llantwit Major's beach**, **Cwm Colhugh**, where there's a café, great rock pools and easy access to the Wales Coast Path.

Where?

Near the coast. Plenty of parking. Railway station on the line between Cardiff and Bridgend. Map reference D5

www.visitthevale.com/llantwitmajor



www.visitthevale.com/llantwitmajor

Download
town guides from
www.visitthevale.com



What's occurin'

Check out what's happening in the Vale all year round at www.visitthevale.com/events

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For a real spectacle, you might fancy visiting during one of our annual events.

Walking boots or dancing shoes...which do you prefer?

Our Vale of Glamorgan Walking Festival and Vale of Glamorgan Festival of Music will get you moving, whatever your taste. Or pop on your running shoes and challenge yourself to compete in the variety of sporting events held on Whitmore Bay beach at Barry Island. For something a little different Gŵyl Fach Y Fro is a celebration of Wales' culture that you won't want to miss. Then indulge in some of the very best local produce at both the Cowbridge Food & Drink Festival which is great fun for families, as well as foodies, or the vibrant Beats, Eats & Treats festival on Barry Island.

Jam-packed summer

The free summer fun kicks off on Barry Island with the **Festival of Transport**, closely followed by visits from the **Red Arrows**. And the entire community gets involved in the **Llantwit Major Victorian Fair**, another great family day out.

Each week of the summer holidays there's something happening on Barry Island including the award winning **Isle of Fire Festival**, **Open Air Cinema** and **Street Theatre Festival**.

Barry is home to the aptly-named music festival **Glastonbarry**, and award-winning **brass bands** provide free musical entertainment on Penarth Pier and a variety of the Vale's parks. Inland there's the bi-annual 3 day festival of stories at the Beyond the Border Storytelling Festival at St. Donats, and a celebration of rural living at the **Vale of Glamorgan Agricultural Show** at Fonmon Castle.

Autumn through to winter

As the nights draw in, the fun continues. Wrap up warm for Ice Skating at Ice Central in Barry and the spectacular **Fireworks Fiesta** on Barry Island. Excited little ones will enjoy seeing Father Christmas (Siôn Corn in Welsh) at Cowbridge's annual **Reindeer Parade**, while Christmas shopping is a pleasure at the **Vale Farmers' Christmas Market**.



Stay a while



The Vale has such a wide range of quality accommodation to suit every taste and budget. everyone is happy.

We have hotels, ranging from budget through to exclusive resort hotels; guest houses and bed and breakfasts and farmhouses offering real on-the-farm experiences. Our self-catering accommodation offer includes beautifully appointed holiday cottages, hostels, caravan and camping sites or Glamping if that's more your style, camping pods and even a 'Caban' (Welsh name for a cabin).

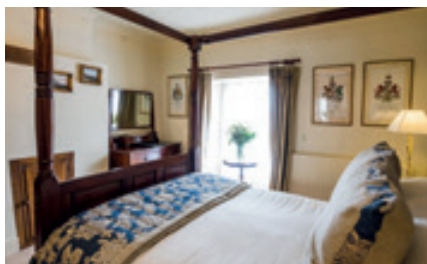
Whatever style of accommodation you are looking for, we're sure you will find it here in the Vale.

www.visitthevale.com/stayawhile

Search our online database for your accommodation of choice. If you'd like help in finding what's right for you contact the tourism team and we'll be happy to help.

Tel: **01446 704867**

Email: **tourism@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk**



Be Inspired...

Hunting for ideas for a family day out? Planning a romantic break or a relaxing day with family or friends? Or you may want to liven things up with some great outdoor activities. Let us inspire you...

Take a look at **www.visitthevale.com** to be truly inspired. There's so much to see and do, we simply can't list each one, so search our online directory to find out what suits you and your friends or family the best. You can even download a directory to browse all that's available.



Planning your visit



Travelling to the Vale and getting around

The Vale of Glamorgan lies next to Cardiff on the South Wales coast, with excellent transport links.



Car The M4 skirts the northern edge of The Vale. Junctions 33, 34 and 35 all lead into the Vale.



Coach National Express runs nationwide services to Cardiff, then an easy change onto local bus services brings you to The Vale.
www.nationalexpress.com

Local bus routes www.traveline-cymru.info



Plane Cardiff Airport is situated right here in The Vale. The frequent Cardiff Airport Express bus service connects the airport to Cardiff city centre. Alternatively, take the shuttle bus to Rhoose Cardiff Airport station and catch a train to Llantwit Major, Barry or Penarth.

www.cardiff-airport.com

www.nationalrail.co.uk



Train There are mainline railway stations at Cardiff (to the east) and Bridgend (to the west). Local stations include Penarth, Dinas Powys, Barry, Barry Island and Llantwit Major.

www.nationalrail.co.uk 08457 484950 (local call rates apply).



Waterbus Between the Barrage at Penarth Marina, Mermaid Quay in Cardiff Bay and Cardiff city centre.

www.cardiffwaterbus.com

07940 142409

Tourist Information

Look out for **Tourist Information Points**  in attractions and shops across the Vale. There you'll find information about the immediate area so you get the most from your visit. Our local Tourism Ambassadors, who provide accommodation or run attractions and activities, will be only too pleased to answer your questions about where to go and what to do.

Some of the larger TIPs are designated as Hubs where you'll find staff who can help with your enquiries:

Cosmeston Lakes Country Park, near Penarth
Happy Days, Cowbridge
Heritage Coast Campsite, Monknash
Heritage Coast Centre, Southerndown

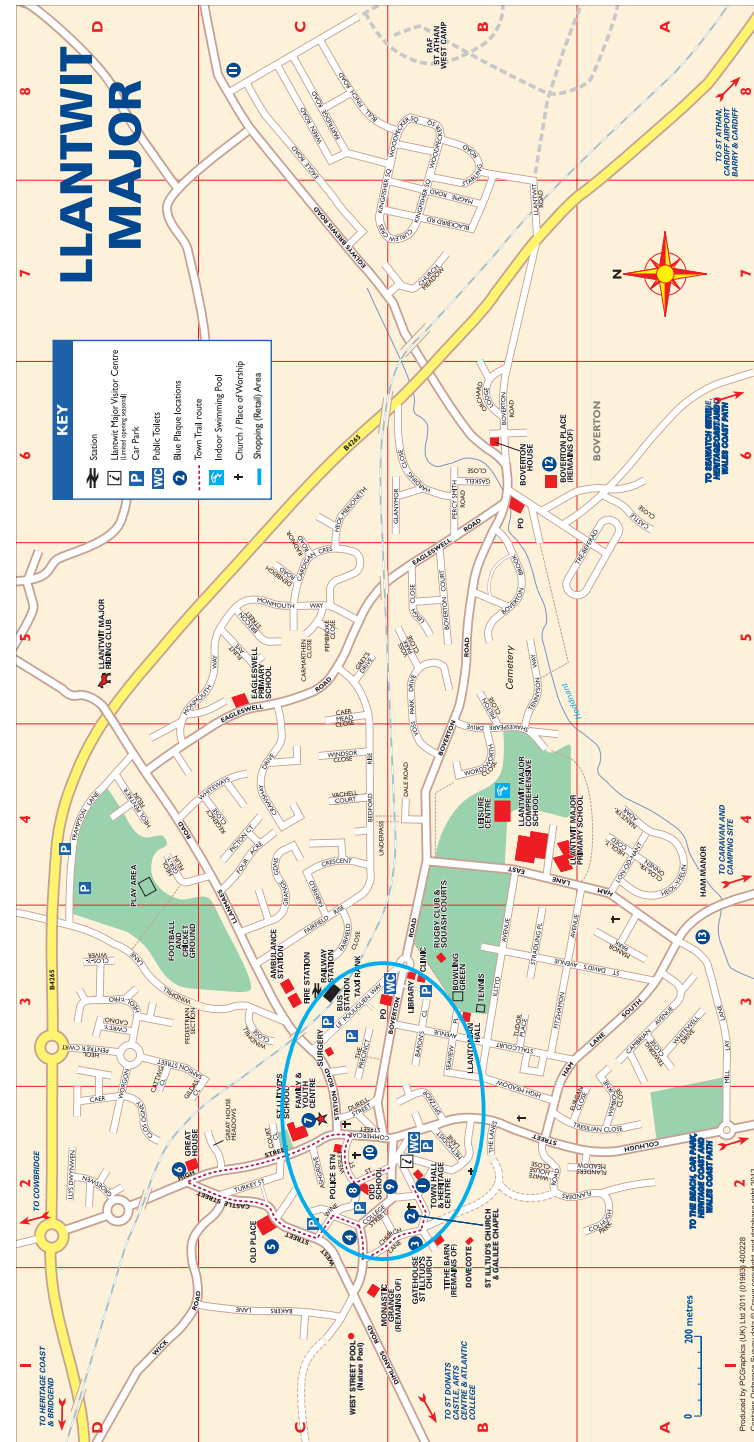
Visit the Vale



Vale Ambassadors

For first-hand knowledge about what to see and where to go, get in touch with one of our Vale Ambassadors. There are 50 such volunteers who are eager to share their enthusiasm for the local area and their specialist knowledge. They can be contacted by email or telephone before you visit the Vale, and some are available to greet you during your trip.

Meet a few of them on pages 32-33, and find out about their interests in the blogs that many of them write at www.visitthevale.com/valeambassadors





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