



Cycling in North Wales

Where in Britain can you find cycle rides with castles, steam trains, mountain, lake and coastal views? Right here in North Wales of course – and all in one day! You don't need to be Sir Bradley Wiggins to experience some superb cycling here – although we have got a couple of challenging routes for the experienced riders among you. We've also got some accessible routes that everyone can enjoy even if it's been years since you last got on a bike – and it's true that you never forget how. So why not give it a go? You don't even need to bring a bike as there are some excellent bike hire shops nearby who'll kit you up with everything you need for a day out on two wheels.

The 24 mile (round trip) family friendly route of [Lôn Eifion Cycleway](#) from Caernarfon to Bryncir runs alongside the Welsh Highland Railway. Starting near the impressive Caernarfon Castle, the traffic-free route climbs 500ft to its highest point before a gentle downhill stretch to the village of Bryncir. Enjoy the whistles of steam trains, the views of Caernarfon Bay and the mountains of Snowdonia and make sure you stop at Inigo Jones' slate workshops along the way for a demonstration of slate cutting and a well-earned rest at the café there. You can hire bikes from [Menai Bikes](#) at the start of the route on the waterfront by Caernarfon Castle including adaptive bikes and tag-a-longs for young children.

Another classic traffic-free bike ride is the [Mawddach Trail](#) from Dolgellau to Barmouth – 19 miles there and back. It's a little further afield than our usual recommendations for a day trip from here but it more than earns its place on this list with its stunning views of Cadair Idris and the quirky rumbly toll-bridge that takes you over the estuary and into the lovely seaside town of Barmouth at the end of the ride. Take a break here and tuck in to fish and chips or an ice cream and perhaps even kick off your shoes and socks and roll up your trouser legs and for a last paddle of the year in the sea on Barmouth's sandy beach before heading back to your start point. [Dolgellau Cycles](#) at the start of the trail hire bikes by the day and also have tag-a-longs, trailers and childrens' seats.

Closer to home, Hiraethog is a relatively undiscovered area just south of here ripe for exploring on two wheels with quiet lanes and country roads criss-crossing the heather-clad moorland. There are also a couple of off-road routes that start and finish at www.llyn-brenig.co.uk where bikes can also be hired. The routes take in the reservoirs of [Llyn Alwen and Llyn Brenig](#) and the area is rich in wildlife and archaeological heritage.

Now for a route for those of you who are fit and experienced cyclists – [Lon Las Ogwen](#). Climbing almost 1000ft from Bangor to Llyn Ogwen over 11 miles on National Cycle Network routes 5 and 82, this route follows a mix of on and off-road gravel paths up the Ffrancon Valley from Bangor, via Tregarth to the mountain lake of Llyn Ogwen. The mountains either side of the narrow Ffrancon



Valley rise to over 3000ft giving genuinely awe-inspiring scenery if you get the opportunity to look up that is! There's a café at the top of the pass for a rest before the exhilarating downhill ride back.

There are cycle routes and then there are the two new routes (50 and 75 miles) of the [Brailsford Way](#) which are in a league of their own. Launched in 2016, and named after British Cycling coach and Team Sky's principal Sir David Brailsford, the route circles the highest mountain in Wales, Snowdon and is made up of tough climbs totalling over 7000 feet and thrilling descents to match. Sir David Brailsford himself said: *"There's no better cycling, or a more stunning part of the world than Snowdonia. Growing up, these routes were the ones which I liked to ride; the road, the climbs, the beautiful blend between the sea and mountains. These were the ones that inspired me."* Although both routes traditionally start and finish in Caernarfon, the 75 mile route passes through Betws-y-Coed so could be started right from your door!