

# Trip Notes: Wales Coast to Coast

Awesome riding and fully-supported, the ultimate journey across Wales.

There's something about a journey. Moving through, rather than around. Going somewhere rather than returning to the start. That journey's even better when it crosses a whole country from ocean to ocean. Join us on a brand new, bucket-list trip from Cardiff to Conwy.

- See the whole of Wales from the south coast to the north coast
- Link the Brecon Beacons, the Elan Valley, the Cambrian Mountains and the lofty peaks of Snowdonia
- Savour some of the best natural trails in the land including the Beacons Gap, Trans Cambrian, Ffordd Ddu, Sarn Helen and the North Wales Path and even find time for a few favourites at Coed y Brenin and the Gwydyr Forest.
- Take in some of the UK's most spectacular scenery from high mountain passes and spectacular summits
- And savour the mouth-watering descents that follow
- Fully supported with luggage transfer, comfortable B&B accommodation and return transport

## Our Journey

### Day 1 - Cardiff

We'll meet at our hotel early afternoon and get bikes etc ready for the start. If time allows, we'll take a short spin down to the beach to dip our toes, saving us time and energy for Day 2.

### Day 2 - Cardiff to Brecon (88km)

After dipping our toes in the waters of Cardiff bay we'll make a hasty exit from the city and follow the Taff Trail north to the Brecon Beacons, where the real action starts. A big climb takes over the legendary 'Gap' and a huge descent drops us into Brecon for the night.

### Day 3 - Brecon to Rhayader - (58km)

Today we cross ground that sees few tyre tracks, but it does little to detract from the amazing scenery with views north to the Cambrian Mountains and south, back to the northern slopes of the hills we crossed yesterday. We pass through Builth Wells and then follow the banks of the River Wye north to Rhayader

### Day 4 - Rhayader to Machynlleth (60km)

We continue north, leaving Rhayader and the Elan Valley and riding on through Llangurig and into the Hafren Forest, basically following the line of the Trans Cambrian route. Next up is a crossing of the spine of the Cambrian Mountains and a huge descent from Foel Fadian - one of the highest points of the route and an amazing viewpoint - down to Machynlleth.

### Day 5 - Machynlleth to Dolgellau (50km)

The route swings west today, entering the Snowdonia National Park and climbing over the shoulder of the remote Mynydd Tarrenau - Snowdonia's southernmost massif. We then hurdle the western end of Cadair Idris, with amazing views up the coast, before dropping to our beds for the night in Dolgellau.

### Day 6 - Dolgellau to Capel Curig (64km)

We spend the whole day in Snowdonia today and we also get a chance to spend some time on Sarn Helen - the remnants of a Roman Road that once crossed Wales. We also get to play in Coed y Brenin, where we can show you a few of our favourite sections of singletrack. Not too much though, it's a long way to Capel Curig and there are a few more hills to get over yet. Our final section slips sweetly past the dramatic peak of Moel Siabod before descending via the Capel Chapel descent to the village for the night.

### Day 7 - Capel Curig to Conwy (54km)

This is a classic day that starts with some singletrack fun in the Gwydyr Forest (home of the Marin Trail). We then leave the forest behind and work our way north, closely following the Conwy Valley before climbing over the spectacular Conwy Mountain for some amazing sea views. All that's left now is to descend sweetly to the coast and dip those toes again before enjoying an ice cream on the seafront.

### Day 8 - Conway to Cardiff

A chance to rest those tired legs as we bus you comfortably back to Cardiff.

## Included in the original trip price:

- All accommodation – 7 nights hotel or B&B accommodation
- Lunches and snacks
- Daily luggage transfers so you can ride with a day pack
- Return transport from Conwy to Cardiff
- Guiding – 6 days guided riding with 2 of the most qualified guides in the land – maximum client to guide ratio 8-1
- Celebratory t-shirt

## A typical day

It's quite likely that no 2 days on this trip will be the same. But we can try...

We'll have breakfast together at a time agreed the previous evening. After a quick recap on the day's brief, we'll load our overnight bags into the van for the journey onto the next night's accommodation, take 5 minutes to sort tyre pressures etc, and then head off. Most days it should be possible to hook up with the van at a prearranged time during the day for snacks and hot drinks.

In the evenings, it will be ideal if we can meet for a pre-dinner drink and have a chat about the plans for the next day.

## Is this trip for me?

This is a big ride with big climbs, big descents and long days. Endurance is the main thing - some days we'll be in the saddle for 5 or 6 hours and out for maybe 8. But it will never be a race - the secret to success here is a steady pace that can be maintained all week. Technically, you'd want to be happy riding a typical trail centre Red graded trails and prepared to walk sections, both up and down in places.

The best training for this kind of trip is actually just getting out riding – preferably longer distances at a steady pace. 30km at a steady pace will be more useful than 15km at racing speed, so if your local trails are short, slow it down and do 2 laps!

We have 2 guides on the trip so we can try to cater for different speeds and ability levels. I'm sure everybody will have their own strengths and weaknesses and everybody will have good days and off days. If we pull together as much as possible a strong team will achieve lots more than a bunch of fit individuals.

## Insurance

Medical insurance isn't necessary in Wales, but we strongly recommend travel insurance to cover you should you get injured or fall ill before the trip or during it.

### Bike cleaning and maintenance

We hope to have access to a hose for bike cleaning each night.

We'll also have a bike stand and some tools for fettling and repairs. Please bring any tools that are specific for your bike.

## Laundry

It is possible to do laundry in some of the accommodation. We can check before travelling if you feel this may be necessary.

### Riding ethics

There's no getting around it, 10 mountain bikers on a trail is pretty conspicuous, and we'll have some impact on both the landscape and other trail users.

As a company, Tom Hutton MTB is 100% committed to minimising our impact in every way we can. We operate a strict 'pack it out' policy for all litter (including apple cores, banana skins and orange peel). We want to try to leave as little trace of our passing as possible.

While we'll enjoy some epic descents and trails during the week, please ride at a speed you can control and at a speed that reflects your line of sight and abilities. We'll almost certainly meet walkers in places and I'd love any interaction to be as positive as possible. Let's give mountain bikers 'a good name'!

## Weather

In Wales, in mid summer, we should expect everything from hot sunny days to wild, wet and windy days. When packing, please bring winter and summer clothing so we can make more informed decisions about what to wear and carry on the day or the night before.

## Kit List

The weather can be very varied in Wales, even in summer, so we need to be prepared. We'll have a briefing every evening to give you an up to date weather forecast and plan the next day. We can share some of the kit to keep packs as light as possible, although on very remote days we need to cover all eventualities.

## Riding kit

Some items can be shared between the group. If you haven't got all the kit please let us know at the first night's briefing.

- Hydration pack big enough to carry everything in the list below – suggested size 15L to 20L
- Water and snacks – gels, energy bars, flapjacks, jelly babies
- Lunch (we supply it but you need to carry it!)
- Dry bag to keep everything dry inside your pack
- Mini pump for your valve type
- 2 inner tubes plus spare ones in the minibus (even if you use tubeless) – These trails are very rocky!
- Tube patches (preferably self-adhesive)
- Tubeless repair kit (if you use tubeless)
- Tyre boot or patch
- Tyre levers
- 2 spare spokes that fit your wheels
- Multi-tool
- 1 set of spare brake pads
- Rear gear hanger for your bike - essential
- Cable ties
- Duct tape (we suggest wrapping 1m around your pump)
- Power link for your chain type and speed
- Mobile phone - in a waterproof case or plastic bag
- Small personal first aid kit
- Insect repellent (we recommend Smidge)
- Sun screen
- Any medication you need

## Recommended clothing

- Helmet – not full face
- Knee and elbow pads
- Cycling shorts and/or waterproof shorts (or trousers)
- Wicking base layers or cycling jerseys
- Mid layer (fleece or soft shell)
- Windproof jacket
- Waterproof jacket
- Insulated jacket or warm emergency layer
- Woolly hat or buff
- Riding glasses
- Gloves (worth having a spare pair if it's wet)
- Waterproof socks
- Cycling shoes (you must be able to walk in them!)

For the minibus

- Small 'hand luggage' bag for post-ride clothes
- Plastic bags for wet and dirty kit
- Chamois cream if you use it

Your guides will carry

- Pliers
- Chain splitter
- Emergency spokes
- Spoke key
- Adjustable spanner
- Cassette tool and chain wrench
- Shock pump
- Puncture and tubeless repair kits
- Small bottle of chain lube
- Spare chain links/joining pins
- Assorted nuts and bolts
- Emergency shelter
- Emergency blanket
- Warm insulated jacket
- First aid kit
- Maps
- Compass
- GPS
- Mobile phones
- VHF radio