nileGUIDE
ALL YOU NEED TO PLAN YOUR PERFECT TRIP

Athena's Pix

Best Cardiff accommodation

Cardiff, 1 Day

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Guide Description

AUTHOR NOTE: There is a wide range of accommodation available in Cardiff, no matter what your budget. If it's an über-cool designer hotel you're after Big Sleep, situated near Cardiff Indoor Arena and the train station, is the place for you. For waterside luxury it’s Cardiff Bay's St David's Hotel that you should be checking into. It's not only stylish but also well located for those wishing to see a show at the Millennium Centre. If you want to know what you're going to be getting in advance, opt for chain hotels Marriot Cardiff or Cardiff Hotel, or for leafy surrounds choose Pontcanna and its Abbey Hotel.

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Itinerary Overview

things to do
restaurants
hotels
nightlife

Day 1 - Cardiff

St. David's Hotel & Spa
Crème de la Crème

Big Sleep Hotel (The)

Cardiff Hilton
Five-star View

Marriott Cardiff Hotel
Five-Crown Luxury

Abbey Hotel
Cardiff in bloom

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Day 1 - Cardiff

QUICK NOTE

contact:
tel: +44 29 2045 4045
fax: +44 29 2048 7056
http://www.thestdavidshotel.info/index.html

location:
Havannah Street
Cardiff CF10 5SD

1 St. David's Hotel & Spa

DESCRIPTION: A by-word for extravagance as far as Cardiff hotels are concerned, St. David's Hotel is equipped to offer the ultimate in quality hospitality and is in itself a landmark of the elegant Cardiff Bay area. The bay's distinctive sail-topped roof is used as a backdrop on Welsh news programs too. Air-conditioned bedrooms with balconies overlooking the bay, a hydrotherapy spa, award-winning restaurants and a first-class concierge service combine to provide an experience of pure bliss and luxury. © wcities.com

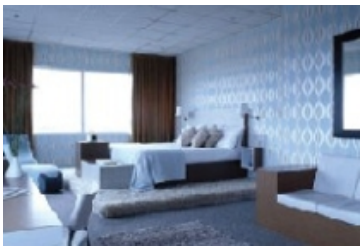
Hotels.com

contact:
http://www.hostelbookers.com/hostels/wales/cardiff/10265/

location:
Bute Terrace
Cardiff CF10 2FE

2 Big Sleep Hotel (The)

DESCRIPTION: A design hotel at affordable prices and recently voted #1 of 25 coolest hotels in the world' - Conde Nast Traveller.Listing by hostelbookers.com © wcities.com



contact:
tel: +44 29 2064 6300
fax: +44 29 2064 6333
http://clkuk.tradedoubler.com/click

location:
Kingsway
Cardiff CF10 3HH

3 Cardiff Hilton

DESCRIPTION: This five-star hotel has already become one of the city's landmarks. Overlooking the castle and civic buildings, the Hilton is minutes away from the city-centre shops, theatre and concert hall in one direction and the National Museum of Wales in the other. Cable TV and a selection of video games. The ordinary holiday-maker will appreciate the multilingual staff (who speak Dutch, German, French, Welsh and English), the choice of coffee shops, bars and restaurants and full use of the health suite which includes a 20-metre pool, sauna, steam room and Jacuzzi. Its high-class accommodation and facilities, including a restaurant and bar, function suites, leisure club and ballroom, make it a popular choice with those wanting to treat themselves to something special. © wcities.com

Hotels.com

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contact:
tel: +44 29 2039 9944
fax: +44 29 2039 5578
http://www.tkqlhce.com/click-2005797-10406976

location:
Mill Lane
Cardiff CF10 1EZ

4 Marriott Cardiff Hotel

Hotels.com

DESCRIPTION: This modern, ten-story tower block hotel is set in the fashionable 'cafe quarter' of Cardiff, allowing easy access to all parts of the city. The bus and train stations are only 100 meters away. Cardiff Bay is a 15 minute walk or can easily be reached by car, train or bus. Besides the usual bar, there is an elegant cocktail lounge and a gift shop. You can also take advantage of the laundry and valet service and shoe shine. For the business traveler, there is a full secretarial service. Some rooms are specially adapted for the disabled. All rooms have full en suite facilities and TVs showing in-room movies. Add to the prime location luxury rooms, business and leisure facilities and the choicest of classy eating places and you're all set for a memorable city break. © wcities.com

contact:
tel: +44 29 2039 0896
fax: +44 29 2023 8311

location:
149 Cathedral Road
Cardiff CF11 9PJ

5 Abbey Hotel

DESCRIPTION: Take a look at the gardens of this hotel. Winner of the Cardiff in Bloom Super-Gardener category and also holding Best Hotel awards, the Abbey offers quality accommodation close to the city centre. Llandaff Cathedral and the Chapter Arts Centre are only a few minutes away, and all the attractions of the city are within easy walking distance. Formerly a private town house, built in 1898 by a wealthy sea captain, the hotel has been thoroughly modernised, but maintains a feeling of calm elegance with its high-ceilinged rooms and feature fireplaces. © wcities.com

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Cardiff Snapshot

Local Info

Cardiff has certainly risen from the grime. At one point in its history, the docks of Cardiff used to be the main coal transport hub from the Welsh Valleys to the rest of the world. Now, the Cardiff that greets every visitor is fresh and vibrant. It seems to have taken on the cloak of youth, perhaps still fuelled by its 2005 win in the Six Nations rugby championship or the childlike anticipation it holds as one of the host cities for the London 2012 Olympics. Whatever it is, there is an air of optimism here, especially when you visit in the summer when festivals, open air dining and drinking, and warm weather simply stops time in its tracks.

Sights

Cardiff Castle is one of the most important landmarks in town. It was rebuilt by the Bute family from the medieval ruin it once was. To its western side is the River Taff which is flanked by Bute Park, a vast and landscaped tranquil space that used to extend towards Castle Coch, another landmark that you should not miss. Other attractions worth visiting are The Millenium Stadium, the National Museum Wales and The Wales Millenium Center. The Llandaff Cathedral should also be included in your itinerary if only for the clear light that gets reflected inside through its glass windows. If you're looking for a place to walk or have a picnic, head for the hills – specifically Caerphilly Mountain or Twmbarlwm Mountain.

Restaurants

Seafood, Welsh lamb and more than fifty kinds of Welsh cheeses are always in full supply in Cardiff, which now holds the distinction of being one of the best dining places in the whole of Wales. There are many restaurants, coffee shops and eateries along Cardiff Bay. The Mermaid Quay has a lot of restaurants and bars for a fun evening out. There are also eateries in the city center where bars and pubs are numerous along St. Mary's Street, Greyfriars Road and Mill Lane.

Shopping

A paradise for every shopaholic in Wales, Cardiff offers a lot of shopping options. David Morgan Royal Shopping Arcade has excellent shops and facilities. Fashion boutiques and unique shops are also found in the High Street Arcades while those who are in the market for antiques or knick knacks to take home should visit the Cardiff Antiques Center or Jacobs Market. For Welsh arts and crafts, head to Craft in the Bay. The biggest souvenir shop in the Cardiff is Castle Welsh Crafts, a very short distance from the Castle.
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History

Taking its name from the river Taff on which it stands(Caer Taff means fortress on the Taff,) Cardiff is Europe's youngest capital city, only being officially recognised as the capital of Wales in 1955. But the history of the city goes back several thousand years. According to John Davies'A History of Wales, people were living in Wales over 250,000 years ago. Evidence of habitation can certainly be traced back to 600 BC, with the arrival of Celts from Europe, but it was the Romans who put Cardiff itself on the map by building a fort here in 75 AD. Remains of a Roman wall are still visible beneath Cardiff Castle. The first written mention of Cardiff dates back to 465 AD in the Annates Cambriae(The Welsh Annals). The first Viking attack on the Welsh coast is recorded in 850 AD and then the Normans took over in the 12th century, building Cardiff Castle on the same site. William the Conqueror himself visited Cardiff during 1081.

During the following centuries, Cardiff remained quite a small entity relying, like much of the rest of South Wales, on the coal and iron industries. But small by no means signified peaceful. There were frequent clashes with the English rulers as well as raids at the hands of the Saxons, Irish and Norse. In 1542 Thomas Capper was burned at the stake in the city for heresy, becoming the first Christian Welsh martyr. In the same year, the second Act of Union came into force, reorganising the structure of Wales, introducing a coherent justice system, but at the same time making English the official language of Wales and barring Welsh speakers from holding public office. This sowed the seeds of a conflict that has lasted until the present day.

Cardiff came briefly to the fore again when Welsh involvement in the English Civil War came to a head with the Battle of St Fagans on May 8, 1648. Occasional re-enactments are still held at the Museum of Welsh Life that now stands on the site. The city really came into its own, however, in the 19th century, with the construction of a canal, and the opening of the Taff Vale Railway in 1841. This linked Cardiff with Merthyr Tydfil—the largest iron producing area in the world—such that goods could be transported in less than an hour. This revolutionised the export of Welsh coal and catapulted Cardiff to the forefront of the industry. The opening of the East Dock in 1859 by the Marquess of Bute reflected Cardiff's flourishing trade status and population expansion.

The Bute family were prominent at this time. Among the wealthiest landowners in Britain, they owned estates in Scotland and Wales, along with Cardiff Castle, Castell Coch(built for the third Marquess of Bute, John Patrick Crichton-Stuart, as a summer residence in 1875 and never occupied), large parts of the city centre and most of Cardiff docks. Under the influence of this new wealth, Cardiff continued to grow in size until it was officially made a city in 1905 by Edward VII. By then, it was the world's major exporter of coal, shipping up to ten million tons in a year. Indeed, the world's first 1,000,000 pounds deal was struck in the Coal Exchange, now a concert venue in Cardiff Bay.

With the decline of the coal industry, the city became an administrative centre. The Bute family gifted their Cardiff holdings to the city council—with certain height restrictions

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placed on future building developments, which explains why the civic centre area of the city retains much of its old character. The 20th century saw the building of the City Hall, the National Museum of Wales and the Welsh Office, and then in 1955, it was made the official capital of Wales.

Despite the collapse of many of the industries upon which it has traditionally relied, the end of the 20th century proved to be an exciting period for Wales. In 1999, Cardiff became the home of the independent Welsh Assembly—a body with many powers, made up of Welsh people to govern Welsh people. The Welsh language is seeing a rise in popularity as it is given equal status alongside English. And the city continues to grow.

For more information on Cardiff, visit the National Museum for an exhibition on the history of Wales from the beginning of time to the present day. The Cardiff Bay Visitor Centre has a scale model of the redevelopment of the docks as well as lots of information about the area.
©

Hotel Insights

From luxury five star hotels to homely bed and breakfast establishments and even a couple of youth hostels, Cardiff boasts a wealth of accommodation in all areas of the city and to suit all budgets. Business and leisure travellers are equally well-served. The major business hotels are to be found in the city centre and Cardiff Bay, while the outlying areas of Roath/Cathays and Canton/Riverside have an abundance of smaller hotels and guest houses, many within a easy walk of central Cardiff. Go a little further out of the city again and you'll find a selection of budget motels and more luxurious country house hotels that offer easy access to the M4 and, from there, all of south Wales; perfect if you're travelling by car.

One of the beauties of Cardiff is its compact size. The city centre can be crossed on foot in a matter of minutes and contains, alongside the famous shopping streets and arcades, the main concert hall, theatre, the Millennium Stadium and Cardiff International Arena. There are also a large number of pubs and clubs, making for a busy and noisy nightlife, especially on weekends. Central hotels are generally of a good standard and are within walking distance of the major attractions of the city. The top luxury hotels include the Thistle, a stone's throw from Cardiff's New Theatre, the Paramount Angel Hotel with its marble floors and crystal chandeliers, and the modern elegance of the Cardiff Hilton—a five star hotel with a purpose built health suite, with views of Cardiff Castle and the Wales National Museum& Gallery.

Of course, the combination of luxury rooms and central location doesn't come cheap, but those who are on a tighter budget will also find something close to the centre to suit them. The Sandringham Hotel features live jazz in its downstairs bar several nights a week and is moderately priced. Another option is the Cardiff Marriott, a modern, tower block hotel set close to thecafe quarter of Cardiff- so called because of the preponderance of trendy little restaurants and bars. Or, for the true trendsetters, the Big Sleep Hotel contains some rooms that were designed by the actor John Malkovich.

If you're not a fan of big hotels, there are still plenty of very nice places to stay close to the centre of Cardiff. Walking out of the centre past the castle and stadium will take you to the broad, tree-lined Cathedral Road where you'll find an abundance of family-run hotels converted from the enormous, Victorian town houses that once stood here. The Hayes Court Hotel has its own licensed restaurant. Or, closer to the Millennium Stadium, sports fans may enjoy the Riverbank, which backs onto the stadium, or the Clare Court, run by a former Wales International footballer. All of these are within 5-10 minutes walk of the city centre.

Also within a short walk of the centre is Cardiff Bay, which is an essential place to visit for modern culture vultures. It is home to the National Assembly for Wales and boasts parks, restaurants, galleries, concert venues and a large leisure complex, all with a distinctively modern flavour. For the ultimate in luxury in this area, spend a night or two at St David's Hotel& Spa set on the waterfront. All rooms have balconies overlooking the Bay. Budget travellers may opt for the Holiday Inn Express.

Moving away from the city centre, the student areas of Roath and Cathays offer plenty of cheap bed and breakfast accommodation in small guest houses that are conversions of private homes. A popular area, public transport into the city centre is good and there are plenty of local shops, restaurants, pubs and takeaways. Roath Park with its lake and clock tower rivals the city centre parks for the number of visitors it attracts. Hotels include Beeches, overlooking the park, the family run Albany and The Lynx, which are both on a main bus route into town.

Some people choose to stay on the outskirts of the city and travel in by bus or train. For a quiet, coastal holiday, wend your way to Penarth—a Victorian town that offers cliff-top walks, a pebble and sand beach and spectacular views over the channel. The atmosphere is quiet and elegant, and Cardiff city centre is only ten minutes away by train. The Raisdale House Hotel has a four-poster suite while the Glendale Hotel is a pleasant, five minute walk through gardens to the sea.

Alternatively, you could choose to stay in the Vale of Glamorgan and enjoy the beautiful countryside. The Old Post Office is located in the village of St Fagans, close to the Museum of Welsh Life. A little further away, towards Barry in the south, is the Egerton Grey Country House Hotel, once a 17th century rectory. Or, if you're a golf fanatic, try the modern Vale of Glamorgan Hotel, Golf& Country Club with 9 and 18-hole courses, a driving range, practice area and full leisure facilities. All are within easy reach of Cardiff by car.

Wherever you choose to stay, be it city or country, you can expect a warm welcome, cooked breakfasts and a wealth of interesting places to visit right out the doorstep. Cardiff has been attracting an increasing number of visitors in recent years so, whether you're travelling for

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business or pleasure, you'll find yourself in good company.
©

Restaurants Insights

Eating out in Cardiff is an experience in itself. The city offers an eclectic mix of cultural traditions and different types of cuisine from Welsh and Thai to Japanese and Portuguese. Add to that the myriad of Chinese and Indian restaurants and takeaways and you'll find yourself spoilt for choice.

City centre pubs are noisy and fun. This atmosphere is carried over into the restaurants and new style cafe bars which combine the best elements of a pub and restaurant with quirky surroundings, background music and an upbeat atmosphere. Bar Med has a party atmosphere and is very popular as a pre-club venue, while the Ha! Ha! Bar& Canteen serves up a a scrumptious mustard mash with onion chutney.

For a lighter lunch, you may want to try one of the many sandwich bars and cafes in the city centre. Servini's serves decent-sized portions of British and Italian food. The young and trendy favour the massive cups of coffee and hot chocolate in the Bar Europa. Many of the department stores also have self-service restaurants, which are reasonably priced and family-friendly.

Moving on into the evening, pre and post-concert dinners are offered in the elegant surroundings of St David's Hall's restaurant, the Celebrity. Just along the road from there is thecafe quarter with a host of trendy restaurants, bars and clubs that often have early evening special offers for concert-goers. Giovanni's has three restaurants in the area, catering for different tastes. You could also try Jumpin' Jacks for a Mexican feast or the Juboraj for high-class Indian food.

A firm Cardiff tradition is a red hot curry after a night at a club. City Road, just out of the city centre, is the place to go if you want something cheap and quick. The Kismet is a good one to try, but most of the restaurants here are open until the early hours of the morning and are very similar in terms of menu and price. There's never any need to book in advance. City Road also has a number of kebab houses, pizza and burger takeaways, Chinese, Mexican and Hawaiian restaurants and traditional fish and chip shops, so you're bound to find something that takes your fancy while you're walking along.

Other restaurants combine Welsh influences with modern European cooking. The Armless Dragon and Le Gallois appeal to the upper end of the market and are both very popular.

The trendiest place to eat at the moment is Cardiff Bay. Be warned that buses are infrequent late at night and stop at around 11p, so you may need to get a taxi back. It's worth making the trip, however, to stroll along the harbour front before dinner and maybe take in a film or visit a club afterwards. For the ultimate in luxury dining, book into the Tides Grill at the five-star St David's Hotel, on the edge of the Bay, and prepare to spend several hours enjoying a leisurely dinner. For something more upbeat, drop into one of the many bars and restaurants which offer live music, cabaret and theme nights. Harry Ramsden's fish and chip restaurant often features singers from the Welsh National Opera, while Buff's combines a wine bar and restaurant and the Sports Cafe has large screen TVs. If you happen to be in the Bay earlier in the day, make sure you visit the Norwegian Church(pictured above). Originally a place of worship for Norwegian seamen it is now a classy arts centre and coffee shop. Alternatively, indulge your taste for the exotic with a plate of sashimi at the Japanese Izakaya.

Families need not miss out, either. Besides the obvious burger bars, there are plenty of restaurants and pubs with restaurants that welcome children. As a general rule, the further you go from the city centre, the quieter the pubs become. The Allensbank is easily reachable from the city centre and has a separate children's play room and Three Elms offers traditional British food and welcomes children.

As far as pubs go, most in the city centre are owned by breweries. Some of the smaller pubs, such as the Irish bar Mulligans, and The Yard retain a more traditional feel and attract an older clientele. Pubs are particularly busy during weekends when crowds of youngsters come in from the South Wales valleys for a night of drinking and clubbing. It's standing room only in most pubs then, so the city centre is best avoided if you prefer a peaceful atmosphere. However, there's so much choice that it's well worth looking around and trying a number of different places during your visit. You'll likely be pleasantly surprised at what you find.
©

Nightlife Insights

Cardiff is well-served for entertainment of all types. From the world-famous National Orchestra of Wales and Welsh National Opera to the various professional and semi-professional theatre companies centred in the city, from large scale pop concerts to solo performances, there is something to suit every taste. Being a multi-ethnic city, you can also find entertainments from different cultural traditions—Japanese drummers, Chinese musicians, Indian dancers. And if you prefer to be an active participant rather than a spectator, there's a multitude of city centre clubs and pubs that have dancing into the small hours. Some of them even offer dancing classes so you can brush up on your technique before hitting the disco floors.

Classical Music, Opera& Ballet St David's Hall is the obvious choice. Home to the National Orchestra of Wales it features a full programme of classical concerts including the Welsh Proms in July and the Cardiff Singer of the World competition every two years. There are also regular visits from ballet and opera companies, and top class orchestras and soloists from all over the world have played here. Opera lovers should give the New Theatre a ring. Tickets for the Welsh National Opera seasons always sell out very quickly, though it's sometimes possible to get tickets

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at short notice if you don't mind where you sit. Recent years have seen operas by Britten, Janacek and Tchaikovsky as well as the much-loved Verdi and Mozart offerings. The Sherman Theatre also has occasional opera and operetta productions —the Cardiff Gilbert and Sullivan society perform here.

For something a little more unusual try the Norwegian Church Arts Centre or the Point in Cardiff Bay. Baroque ensembles, guitar soloists and international groups make regular appearances.

Ballet lovers have less choice, but St David's Hall stages ballet performances every Christmas, the Northern Ballet makes regular appearances at the New Theatre and Diversions Dance Company may be seen at the Sherman. Also look out for modern dance performances at Chapter Arts Centre.

Popular Music For the big pop concerts you'll have to go to the Cardiff International Arena or the Millennium Stadium, and be prepared to book well in advance. There are, however, some smaller venues that are surprisingly good. The Coal Exchange in Cardiff Bay has several featured acts. Live Jazz is on offer at the city centre's Jazz Cafe and Riverbank, which overlooks the Millennium Stadium. St David's Hall also features some popular music on its programme, though it tends towards easy listening, folk and country.

Welsh speakers and learners are always welcome at Clwb Ifor Bach, a pub and club that acts as a showcase for up-and-coming Welsh bands and soloists as well as featuring groups from other parts of the British Isles. Indeed, many of the city centre pubs have regular live music nights—check out the local publications for full details of what's happening on any night.

Theatre From classical to contemporary, there's plenty of choice. The New Theatre is Cardiff's largest stage and features a mixed programme of West End and Broadway hits, Shakespeare, Ayckborn and Oscar Wilde comedies, contemporary drama and family pantomimes. Close by, the smaller Sherman is more experimental in nature and features youth theatre productions in the smaller studio theatre and comedy, small-scale opera and off-beat drama in the main theatre. Many Welsh writers are showcased here, so come along if you want to sample some local talent. Chapter Arts Centre also offers experimental drama, including works by the students at the Welsh College of Music and Drama, while in the summer months there are open-air productions of Shakespeare and popular comedy dramas at venues such as the Museum of Welsh Life at St Fagans, Castell Coch and Cardiff Castle.

Cinema There is a twelve-screen UCI Cinema in Cardiff Bay(pictured above), which has a full programme of all the latest films. Chapter Arts Centre is the premier'Art House' cinema and runs an annual film festival that features the best of world cinema.

Comedy Cardiff Bay is a prime spot for comedy with the Glee Club. Cardiff's first dedicated comedy venue, it features some of the biggest names on the UK circuit. St David's Hall and the Sherman Theatre both feature performances by new and established names(acts from the Edinburgh Fringe Festival often turn up in the Sherman). Many of the city's pubs also host comedy slots. See the local newspapers for details.

Daytime Entertainment There's plenty to see and do in Cardiff during the day. You could spend a whole day in the National Museum& Gallery. One of Cardiff's best known landmarks, it has several large art galleries and exhibition rooms and, unusual for a museum of this size, entry is free. For a taste of Welsh history take a trip to the open air Museum of Welsh Life. Again, entry is free and there are often special events in the summer and on public holidays. Children, meanwhile, will love Techniquest, the'hands on' science centre in Cardiff Bay. Back into the city centre, Cardiff Castle houses a small museum and a guided tour is recommended to anyone with an interest in history, architecture or interior design. Follow this up with a meal in one of the many city centre restaurants and a trip to a concert, show or club, and your time in Cardiff will fly by.
©

Things to Do Insights

For a capital city, Cardiff is surprisingly easy to get around. The city centre is small enough that you can walk across it in twenty minutes, and many of the major attractions, such as Cardiff Castle, the National Museum& Gallery, St David's Hall and Cardiff International Arena are situated there. The city's newest development, Cardiff Bay, is a ten minute walk from the centre and, again, it is possible to walk around all the main attractions in a very short space of time.

The following tours are recommended as a way of getting an overview of the main areas of the city in a short time. Both can be comfortably completed in an afternoon, although you may wish to allow more time to explore the museums and galleries along the way.

In addition to these two tours, many people come to Cardiff for the shopping. It's recommended that you start at the Capitol Shopping Centre with its modern array of shops and cafes, come out by the front entrance and continue left along Queen Street, where you'll find all the famous name department stores. You'll pass St David's Centre and Queens Arcade on your left- both of them well worth a look. Cross High Street at the pedestrian crossing and you'll come to a large Welsh gifts shop, and Castle Arcade which has several more Welsh shops and cafes. When you're finished here, double back and go down High Street and then St Mary Street towards the bus station. You'll find several more interesting arcades on the left hand side, along with the enormous Howells department store and a traditional indoor market. These link to an area known as the Hayes, which boasts some large bookstores and plenty of little takeaway shops for food.

TOUR 1: A Historical Walk in Cardiff

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Wales' capital is steeped in history but much of its earlier history of druids and Celtic warriors has left little trace.

Start: Castle Street, Cardiff Castle.

Cardiff Castle dates back approximately 2,000 years. The Romans camped here, then the Norman conquerors built a fortress and the Marquises of Bute lived amid its spectacular gilt ceilings, murals, gothic carvings and stained-glass windows during the 18th and 19th centuries. Wales' past is depicted colourfully on the walls of the Banqueting Hall. See the ornate Clock Tower and the peacocks on the Castle Green. You can view the River Taff in Bute Park.

St John's Church is in St John Street(pedestrian area). Built in 1473, the church is an integral part of Cardiff's history. Carry on down Working Street and stop off for lunch at one of the great little restaurants in the city'scafe quarter. Then turn around and take a right down Bridge Street. Turn left up Charles Street and you will pass St David's Roman Catholic Cathedral on your left, which dates back to 1887.

Cross Duke Street, then walk up Park Place and cut through Gorsedd Gardens—City Hall will be on your left and the National Museum and Gallery on your right. The path joins onto Museum Avenue, which surrounds a square. Cathays Park is in the middle, surrounded by Cardiff University, the Law Courts, Welsh Office and the War Memorial bang in the centre.

City Hall magnificently houses the council. Step inside to see the sculptures of past Princes and Welsh heroes. It is next to the National Museum and Gallery. The Gallery has the largest Impressionist art collection outside of France. Inside, watch how Wales evolved geographically on film and with the aid of 3-D models and take a look at the science exhibits—the museum has everything from archeology to zoology.

Evening

Spend the evening at the Sherman Theatre- an arts theatre which hosts national and international premieres.

TOUR 2: Arts Around the Bay

The art scene has flourished around the redeveloped docklands. The Bay is a vibrant strip with an interesting history to boot.

Start: Coal Exchange — Mount Stuart Square, Cardiff Bay.

Coal Exchange- built in 1886 to trade coal, in what was once the largest exporter of coal in the world. Times have changed, and it is now an arts and entertainment venue. Mount Stuart Square has some of Cardiff's most beautiful listed buildings. Walk around The Point(formerly St Stephen's Church) on the Square's corner, which is now a performing arts centre and stroll down West Bute Street. Turn left along James Street and on your left you will come across...

Craft in the Bay- on the corner of Bute Street and Bute Place. Here you will find first-rate Welsh craftsmen, members of the Makers Guild, showing their work. Delicate jewellery, creative crafts, interesting wooden pieces and rustic woven baskets are in the gallery. Artwork is for sale here, so bring cash. Refuel with a coffee in the main gallery shop.

Then walk around the Inner Harbour for lunch- Harry Ramsden's is a fish and chip restaurant that comes complete with chandelier and hosts opera and jazz evenings. Otherwise have a bite along the waterfront, or sit in a deck chair with your takeaway.

Proceed around the Millennium Waterfront to the beautiful red brick edifice, Pierhead Building, which dominates the waterfront. Built in 1896, it remains a favourite Cardiff landmark.

Walk down Harbour Drive and try to catch the sun setting. During the summer, there is plenty of outdoor entertainment for all the family to enjoy free of charge—concerts, comedy, mime and street theatre all take place regularly.

Cardiff Bay Visitor Centre is at the end of Harbour Drive. This futuristic award-winning Tube building tells the history of the Bay with photos and audio-visual material. View the plans to regenerate the 2,700 acres of waterfront.

To your left you will see the red Lightship 2000—the Helwick Light Vessel LV14. It used to guide ships off the rocks in South Wales and is now being run as a coffee shop and exhibition centre by a group of Christian churches. You can step on board and enjoy a drink on the deck.

Evening

Enjoy a performance at the Norwegian Church Arts Centre, where you can also eat. This timber construction was built as a place of worship for Norwegian sailors in 1867. It was rebuilt in 1987 and opened by Princess Martha Louise of Norway in 1992. Alternatively, head back into town on the bus to St David's Hall for dinner and a concert.
©

Travel Tips

Getting There:

By Air:

Cardiff International Airport(CWR) (+44 1446 71 1111;http://www.cardiffairportonline.com) provides direct flights from European destinations.

Air Malta(+356 21 690 890/http://www.airmalta.com)

Air Wales(+1792 633204/http://www.airwales.com)

BMI Baby(+890 710 081(France)/http://www.bmibaby.com)

KLM(http://www.klm.com)

Ryanair(http://www.ryanair.co.uk)

Thomson Fly(+43 0192 89 598/http://www.thomsonfly.com)

Zoom Airlines(+1 866 359 9666/ http://www.flyzoom.ca)

For international flights or for those who prefer to travel to Cardiff via

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London airports, Heathrow International Airport(LHR)(+44 870 000 0123http://www.baa.co.uk/main/airports/heathrow/) is the world's most busy international airport. Considered the hub of the aviation world, it is the base for over 90 airlines.

Gatwick International Airport(BAA)(+44 870 000 2468;http://www.baa.co.uk/main/airports/gatwick) and Stansted International Airport(STN)(+44 870 000 0303;http://www.baa.com/main/airports/stansted) are also major ports carrying similar airlines. Continue travel to Cardiff via train or coach.

American Airlines(+1 817 967 2000/http://www.aa.com)

Air Canada(+1 800 776 3000/http://www.aircanada.ca)

Air China(http://www.airchina.com.cn)

Air France(+1 800 871 1366/http://www.airfrance.com)

Air India(http://www.airindia.com)

Alitalia(+ 1 800-223-5730/http://www.alitalia.com)

British Airways(+1 800 247 9297/http://www.british-airways.com)

Iberia(+ 1-800-772-4642/http://www.iberia.com)

Japan Airlines(+1 800 525 3663/http://www.japanair.com)

Korean Air(+1 800 438 5000/http://www.koreanair.com)

Qantas(+1 604 279 6611/http://www.qantas.com)

United Airlines(+1 800 241 6522/http://www.ual.com)

Virgin Atlantic Airways(+ 1 800 862 8621/http://www.virgin-atlantic.com)

Purple Parking(http://www.purpleparking.com) offers an airport parking service for business and leisure travelers.

By Rail:

High-speed InterCity trains provide transportation from most cities to Cardiff. The journey from London to Cardiff takes under two hours and departs every 30 minutes. Regional railways run directly to Cardiff from Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Nottingham, Bristol, Southampton, Exeter, Torbay and Portsmouth. Rail Enquiries:(+ 44(0)8457 484950,http://www.railtrack.co.uk) Rail Ticket Bookings:(+ 44 8457 000125,http://www.traindirect.co.uk) Eurostar:(+ 44(0)990 186186,http://www.eurostar.com)

By Sea:

If traveling from mainland Europe, ferry companies include: Stena Line:(+ 44 8705 70 7070,http://www.stenaline.co.uk) Brittany Ferries:(+ 44 870 5360 360,http://www.brittany-ferries.co.uk)

Condor Ferries:(+ 44 1305 76 1551,http://www.condorferries.co.uk) For those traveling from Ireland via ferry, there is a regular direct service between Dublin to Holyhead(Anglesey), Rosslare to Fishsword(Pembroke) and Cork to Swansea. Stena Line:(+44 8705 70 7070,http://www.stenaline.co.uk) Irish Ferries:(+44 8705 32 9129,http://www.irishferries.ie) Swansea Cork Ferries:(+44 1792 456116,http://www.swansea-cork.ie)

By Coach:

Travel line:http://www.traveline.org.uk(for all public transportation information) National Express Coaches:http://www.gobycoach.com Cardiff Bus:http://www.cardiffbus.com Bay Xpress:http://www.cardiff.gov.uk/bayexpress

By Car:

Cardiff is located on the national motorway system. From London, take the M4, which runs through the north of the city. From the Midlands, the North of England and Scotland, take the M6, M5 and M50/M4. From the South and South West of England take the M5 and M4. From West Wales, take the M4. For the latest on Car Parking in Cardiff- visit the Cardiff County Council website(http://www.cardiff.gov.uk/traffic/internet/Traffic_Management/carparking.htm).

Transport Direct:

Transport Direct(http://www.transportdirect.info/TransportDirect/en/) is a complete transport journey planner for Great Britain. The site covers train, flight, coach, car route planning, etc.

Getting Around:

Public Transit Info:

Park& Ride(+44 845 606 4446) with locations throughout the city for bus connections

The Cardiff County Council Transport Information sitehttp://www.cardiff.gov.uk/traffic/internet/community_safety_and_public_transport/Public%20Transport/amansingh/home.htm provides a comprehensive guide(air, buses, coaches, etc) for travel within the city. For timetable information on public transport services in Cardiff, contact Traveline Public Transport Info(http://www.traveline.org.uk; +44 870 608 2 608)

By Bus:

Cardiff Bus(http://www.cardiffbus.com/) is the main local public bus transport for the city.

By Coach:

National Express: Britain's Coach Network(+44 1179 54 1022;http://www.nationalexpress.com/) Mega Bus(http://www.megabus.com/) Arriva(+44 1443 68 2671;http://www.arriva.co.uk/bustimes)

By Train:

National Rail(http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/) Arriva(http://www.arrivatrainswales.co.uk/) For information on train timetables and transport planning services, check out the Rail Track website(http://www.rail.co.uk/ukrail/planner/planner.htm).

By Taxi:

In Cardiff there are 400 licensed taxis(hackney carriages) and 600 private hire vehicles. All taxis have roof top signs and are equipped with a meter where the tariff is set by the Cardiff County Council. There are designated stands or you can hail them on the street. Private hire vehicles

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do not have a roof sign and must be pre-booked. There are no designated stands and cannot be hailed on the street. Some companies include:

Capital Cabs(+44 29 2077 7777;+44 29 2034 4344;+44 29 2066 6666;+44 29 2022 2999) Delta Taxis(+44 29 2020 2020) Dragon Taxis(+44 29 20 333 333) K-Tax(+44 29 2070 8525) Wheelchair Taxis(+44 29 2066 6333) Premier Cars(+44 29 2055 5555) Town Cars(+44 29 2070 0799)
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Fun Facts

Cardiff State/Province: Wales **Country:** United Kingdom

Cardiff by the Numbers:

Population: 302,000 Elevation: 220 feet Average January temp: 5 degrees C(41 degrees F). Average July temp: 16 degrees C(61 degrees F). Annual rainfall: 92 mm(36.4 inches).

Quick Facts:

Time zone: GMT Electricity: 240 volts AC, 50Hz; square three-pin plugs are standard Country dialing code: 44.

Did you know?

Until the early 20th century, Cardiff was considered the greatest coal-shipping port in the world. Also, Cardiff is the center of the Welsh-language broadcasting industry with studios such as the British Broadcasting Corp. located in the city.

Orientation:

Cardiff is dually the capital and largest city in Wales. It is located on the Taff River in the southeast part of the country on Bristol Channel.
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