

Pembrokeshire



Like a little corner of California transplanted to Wales, Pembrokeshire is where the west meets the sea in a welter of surf and golden sand, a scenic extravaganza of spectacular sea cliffs, seal-haunted islands and beautiful beaches.

Among the top-three sunniest places in the UK, this wave-lashed western promontory is one of the most popular holiday destinations in the country. Traditional bucket-and-spade seaside resorts like Tenby and Broad Haven alternate with picturesque harbour villages such as Solva and Porthgain, interspersed with long stretches of remote, roadless coastline frequented only by walkers and wildlife.

Almost one-third of the county, including all of the coastline, is protected within the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park – a 200-mile-long adventure playground famous for its surfing, sea kayaking, coasteering and rock climbing. And then there's the Pembrokeshire Coast Path, a 186-mile roller coaster of a long-distance trail that will sort out the hardcore hikers from the Sunday-afternoon strollers. The park is also a haven for wildlife; it's home to dolphins, porpoises, seals and sea birds, including the world's largest colony of Manx shearwaters.

There are historical attractions too, from the imposing medieval castles at Pembroke, Carew and Manorbier to the age-worn cathedral and Bishop's Palace of St David's – the smallest city in Britain and the cradle of Welsh Christianity. To the north rise the rounded ridges of the Mynydd Preseli, source of the Stonehenge bluestones, which watches over a mysterious prehistoric landscape that includes the dolmen (Neolithic burial chamber) of Pentre Ifan, the biggest megalithic monument in Wales.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Striding out along the dramatic clifftop paths around **St David's Head** (p189)
- Enjoying a picnic above the golden sands of **Barafundle Bay** (p170)
- Going dolphin-spotting in the waters off **Skomer Island** (p183)
- Catching your first wave at **Whitesands Bay** (p189)
- Contemplating centuries past at **St David's Cathedral** (p184)



PEMBROKESHIRE COAST NATIONAL PARK

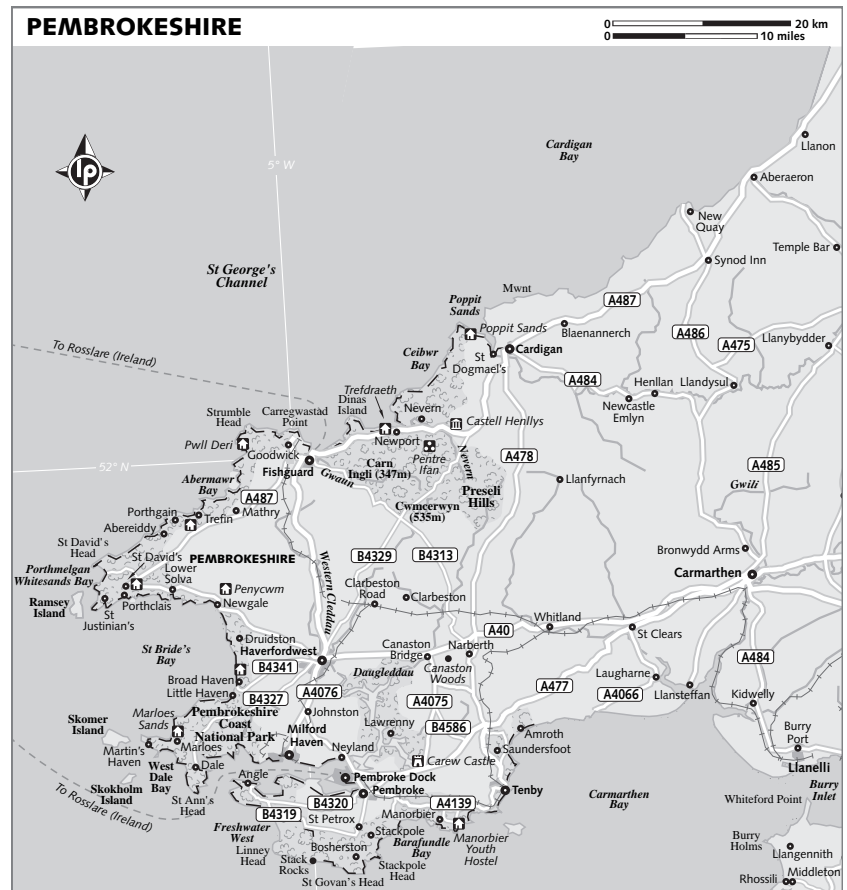
The Pembrokeshire Coast National Park (Parc Cenedlaethol Arfordir Sir Benfro), established in 1952, takes in almost the entire coast of Pembrokeshire and its offshore islands, as well as the moorland hills of Mynydd Preseli in the north. Its many attractions include a scenic coastline of rugged cliffs with fantastically folded rock formations interspersed with some of the best beaches in Wales, and a profusion of wildlife – Pembrokeshire's sea cliffs and islands support huge breeding populations of sea birds, while seals, dolphins,

porpoises and whales are frequently spotted in coastal waters.

The park is also a focus for activities, from hiking and bird-watching to high-adrenaline sports such as surfing, coasteering, sea kayaking and rock climbing.

INFORMATION

There are three national park visitor centres – in Tenby, St David's and Newport – and a dozen tourist offices scattered across Pembrokeshire. Pick up a copy of *Coast to Coast* (online at www.visitpembrokeshirecoast.com), the park's free annual newspaper, which has lots of information on park attractions, a calendar of events and details of park-organised activities, including guided walks, themed



PEMBROKESHIRE

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tours, cycling trips, pony treks, island cruises, canoe trips and minibus tours. The National Park Authority's website (www.pcnpa.org.uk) is also packed with useful information.

ACTIVITIES

The centres listed here offer a range of activities and adventure sports for individual travellers, as well as residential group-based programmes. Activities include coasteering, sea kayaking, mountain biking, surfing, coastal hiking, horse riding, rock climbing and abseiling. Both places have their own accommodation and bar, supply healthy food and will collect you from the train or bus station. Typical prices are around £45/85 for a half-/full-day adventure, and £190 for an all-inclusive weekend.

Preseli Venture (☎ 01348-837709; www.preseliventure.com; Parcynole Fach, Mathry, Haverfordwest) Off the A487 between St David's and Fishguard.

TYF Adventure (☎ 01437-721611, 0800 132588; www.tyf.com; 1 High St, St David's)

Walking

The 186-mile Pembrokeshire Coast Path is one of the most beautiful long-distance walks in Britain; see p197 for more details. If you don't feel up to the full 14- or 15-day hike, there are lots of opportunities for short walks along various sections of the trail.

If you have only limited time, recommended one-day stretches include from Dale to Martin's Haven, and Caerfai to Whitesands Bay, close to St David's. Various shuttle buses serve the route in summer, allowing you to walk short sections and return to your starting point.

From April to October, National Park rangers lead a variety of guided walks; a full day costs £4, and events are listed in *Coast to Coast*. In May-June there is a 14-day guided walk of the entire path ☎ 0845-345 7275 costing £180. For baggage-carrying services see right.

The national park website (www.pcnpa.org.uk) has an excellent online walking guide, listing more than 200 walks ranging from easy strolls to 10-mile hikes; you can search by difficulty, distance and region, then print out a map and route description.

Cycling

Bikes are not allowed on the Pembrokeshire Coast Path, but there are plenty of quiet lanes and bridleways through isolated hamlets and deep woods, and some coastal tracks. Summer

traffic on A-roads, especially the A487 in the north, can make cycling hazardous, so stick to unclassified roads or B-roads.

Parts of Lôn Geltaidd (the Celtic Trail), passes through Pembrokeshire; see p60 for more on the national cycling network. There are bike-hire places in many of the major villages and towns.

Water Sports

Pembrokeshire has some of Britain's best surfing at beaches such as Tenby South, Manorbier, Freshwater West and West Dale Bay in the south, and at Broad Haven, Newgale and Whitesands Bay in the west. Windsurfing and kite surfing are also popular. There are several surf schools where you can take lessons.

First pioneered on the Pembrokeshire coast, coasteering is a bit of a superhero sport – equipped with wetsuit, flotation jacket and helmet, you make your way along the coastal cliffs by a combination of climbing, traversing, scrambling, cliff jumping and swimming.

The western tip of the coast is one of the UK's finest sea-kayaking areas. Beginners can enjoy coastal trips starting from calm harbours and bays.

Pony Trekking & Horse Riding

The Pembrokeshire coast is a fantastic area for riding – along beaches, across open moorland, along wooded bridleways or down quiet country lanes – and there are a dozen stables in or near the national park; see *Coast to Coast* for listings.

Rock Climbing

Pembrokeshire can boast some of the finest sea-cliff climbing in Britain, with routes of all grades, mostly on limestone. The biggest concentration of classic routes is near Bosherton in South Pembrokeshire, from Stack Rocks near St Govan's Head to Stackpole Head. The main climbers' hang-out is Ye Olde Worlde Café (Ma Weston's; p170) in Bosherton. For full coverage of routes and access, get the two-volume *Climbers Club Guide to Pembrokeshire* (£22).

TOURS

Organised tours and walks are listed in *Coast to Coast*. The following organisations offer organised walking holidays, and/or can arrange baggage transfer if you want to hike the Coast Path without carrying a heavy pack.

Celtic Trails (☎ 01600-860846; www.pembrokeshirecoastpath.com; PO Box 11, Chepstow NP16 6DZ) Offers flexible self-guided walking holidays along the Coast Path, from three- to 13- days, staying in B&Bs.

Greenways Holidays (☎ 5501834-862109; www.greenwaysholidays.com; Old School, Station Rd, Narberth) Organised walking and cycling tours.

Tony's Taxis (☎ 01437-720931; www.tonystaxis.net; Maes Dewi, St David's) Provides a luggage transfer service covering the area from Little Haven to Fishguard.

SLEEPING

There are nine YHA/Hi hostels in the national park (at Manorbier, Penycwm, Marloes Sands, Broad Haven, St David's, Trefin, Pwll Deri, Newport and Poppit Sands), and a couple of independent hostels at Fishguard and Porthgain.

With the permission of the landowner or farmer, it's possible to camp almost anywhere, although not on National Trust (NT) land.

GETTING AROUND

In addition to the main, year-round bus routes, there is a range of special bus services (some of them summer only, some year-round), with names such as Poppit Rocket, Strumble Shuttle and Celtic Coaster, aimed at walkers and other visitors to the Pembrokeshire coast. For routes and timetables, see www.pembrokeshiregreenways.co.uk. Tourist offices give out free timetable booklets listing all the bus services of use to visitors.

Trains are only useful for travel from Swansea to Fishguard, Tenby and Pembroke.

SOUTH PEMBROKESHIRE

TENBY (DINBYCH Y PYSGOD)

☎ 01834 / pop 4900

With its pastel-painted Georgian houses, picturesque boat-crowded harbour and long sandy beaches, Tenby is a typical bucket-and-spade, ice-cream-and-candy-floss seaside resort.

The town has avoided being taken over by either amusement arcades or terminal twyness, although in summer its population swells massively. On summer weekends it can get pretty lively, with the pubs spilling over with boisterous, beery lads wolf-whistling at gangs of girls out on hens nights, while out of season it reverts to a sedate resort full of retired couples walking the dog on the beach.

The Pembrokeshire Coast Path (p197) runs through Tenby and, as the biggest town in the national park, it's a major stopover for walkers.

History

Originally a Norman stronghold, Tenby flourished in the 15th century as a centre for the textile trade, exporting cloth in exchange for salt and wine. Clothmaking declined in the 18th century, but the town soon reinvented itself as a fashionable watering place. The arrival of the railway in the 19th century sealed its future as a resort, and William Paxton (owner of the Middleton estate in Carmarthenshire, now home to the National Botanic Garden of Wales, p157) developed a saltwater spa here. Anxiety over a possible French invasion of Milford Haven led to the construction in 1869 of a fort on St Catherine's Island.

Among those who have taken inspiration or rest here are Horatio Nelson, Sir William and Lady Hamilton, Jane Austen, George Eliot, JMW Turner, Beatrix Potter and Roald Dahl. The artist Augustus John was born here, and he and his sister Gwen lived here during their early life.

Orientation

The town's main landmark is the prominent headland of Castle Hill, site of the Norman stronghold. Tenby harbour lies to its west, with the old town rising steeply above it. The old town is bounded to the west by the city walls, which run north-south along South Pde and St Florence Pde.

The bus station is next to the tourist office and main car park on upper Park Rd, 100m west of the old town walls; the train station is 300m west.

Parking can be a struggle, especially in July and August when vehicles are barred from the town centre. During this period, free shuttle buses run to the town centre from the Salterns and North Beach car parks, on the A4139 and A478 respectively.

Information

Cofion (Bridge St) Interesting secondhand bookshop.

National Park Visitor Centre (South Pde; 11 10am-5.30pm Apr-Oct)

Police station (☎ 842303; Warren St)

Post office (Warren St)

Tenby Book Shop (Tudor Sq)

Tenby Cottage Hospital (☎ 842040; Trafalgar Rd) Southwest of the centre.

Tourist Office (☎ 842002; Unit 2, Upper Park Rd; 10am-5.30pm Jun-Sep, 10am-4pm Mon-Sat Oct-May)
Webb Computers (☎ 844101; 17 Warren St; 9am-5pm Mon-Sat; per hr £1) Internet access.

Sights

OLD TENBY

Tenby's oldest buildings are found on the Dickensian steep-stepped Quay Hill. You can visit the handsomely restored **Tudor Merchant's House** (NT; ☎ 842279; Quay Hill; adult/child £2.50/1.20; 10am-5pm Mon, Tue, Thu-Sat, 1-5pm Sun Apr-Sep, 10am-3pm Mon, Tue, Thu & Fri, noon-3pm Sun Oct), the town house of a late-15th-century merchant, which boasts late-medieval frescoes.

The graceful arched roof of **St Mary's Church** is dotted with charming wooden bosses, mainly dating from the 15th century and carved into flowers, cheeky faces, mythical beasts, fish and even a mermaid holding a comb and mirror. There's a memorial here to Robert Recorde, a local 16th-century writer and mathematician who invented the 'equals' sign. The young Henry Tudor was hidden here before fleeing to Brittany. It's thought that he left by means of a tunnel into the cellars under Mayor Thomas White's house across the road (where Boots is now).

CASTLE HILL & ST CATHERINE'S ISLAND

William Paxton built his saltwater baths above the harbour in what is now **Laston House** (1 Castle

Sq). The Greek writing on the pediment translates as the optimistic 'The sea will wash away all the evils of man'. Beyond here, a path leads out past the old and new **RNLI lifeboat stations** and around the Castle Hill headland. On top of the hill are the ruins of the Norman castle, a memorial to Prince Albert and a fine view over the coast.

The path leads to **Tenby Museum & Art Gallery** (☎ 842809; Castle Hill; adult/child £2.50/1.20; 10am-5pm Mar-Dec, 10am-5pm Mon-Fri Feb, closed Christmas-end Jan), which covers the town's development from a fishing village into a 19th-century seaside resort bigger than Blackpool, with interesting exhibits ranging from delicate Roman vases to a Victorian antiquarian's study. There's also a re-created pirate's cell and a gallery of paintings by Augustus and Gwen John.

At low tide you can walk across the sand to **St Catherine's Island**, but it's a long, cold wait if you get trapped by the tide – check tide tables in *Coast to Coast*, at any newsagent or ask at the tourist office. The Victorian fort on the island is closed to the public.

CALDEY ISLAND

Boat trips run from Tenby harbour to **Caldey Island** (☎ 844453; www.caldey-island.co.uk; adult/child £9/5; 10am-5pm Mon-Fri Apr-Oct), home to lots of grey seals and sea birds, and a red-topped, white-washed monastery that houses a community of around 20 Cistercian monks. The monks live an austere life but make various luxurious products for sale, including perfume (based on the island's wildflowers), shortbread and chocolate, and do so well that they now employ people from the mainland.

There are twice-daily guided tours of the monastery and great walks around the island, with good views from the lighthouse. Make sure you visit the old priory and St Iltyd's Church, with its oddly shaped steeple. Inside is a stone with inscriptions in ogham (an ancient Celtic script).

Boats to Caldey Island depart half-hourly from the harbour at high tide and from Castle Beach at low tide. Tickets are sold from a kiosk at the harbour slipway.

Little **St Margaret's Island** at the western tip of Caldey is a nature reserve (landings are prohibited); it's home to grey seals and also Wales' biggest colony of cormorants.

The **Catalina** (☎ 843545; adult/child £6/3; 11 Apr-Oct), a vessel that can carry up to 120 passengers, offers 1½-hour cruises around Caldey

Island and St Margaret's Island (without landing) to view birds and seals; in July and August there are also two-hour sunset cruises.

Activities

Guided walks of Tenby's historical sites are run by **Town Trails** (☎ 845841; www.guidedtours.wales.co.uk; adult/child £3.75/2.75; 11 Mon-Sat mid-Jun-mid-Sep). There are 1¼- to 1½-hour walks, with themes such as ghosts or pirates.

Tenby Watersports (☎ 843553; Castle Slipway) arranges water-skiing, wakeboarding, speedboat rides and kayak hire. Keen surfers should head to Tenby South Beach, which offers some of the best breaks in Pembrokeshire.

Tenby Fishing (☎ 07974 623542; www.tenbyfishing.co.uk) offers sea-angling trips to fish for mackerel in the waters around Caldey Island (£8 per person); all tackle is supplied, and the trips are suitable for kids. Book your trips at the kiosk next to the Caldey Island ticket kiosk.

You can rent bikes from **Tenby Cycles** (☎ 845573; The Norton; 9.30am-5.30pm Mon-Sat) for £10 a day.

Festivals

The **Tenby Arts Festival** (☎ 843839; www.tenbyartsfest.co.uk) runs for a week in late September, with street performers, poetry, classical-music concerts, samba bands, kite flying, sand-sculpture competitions, choirs and dancing.

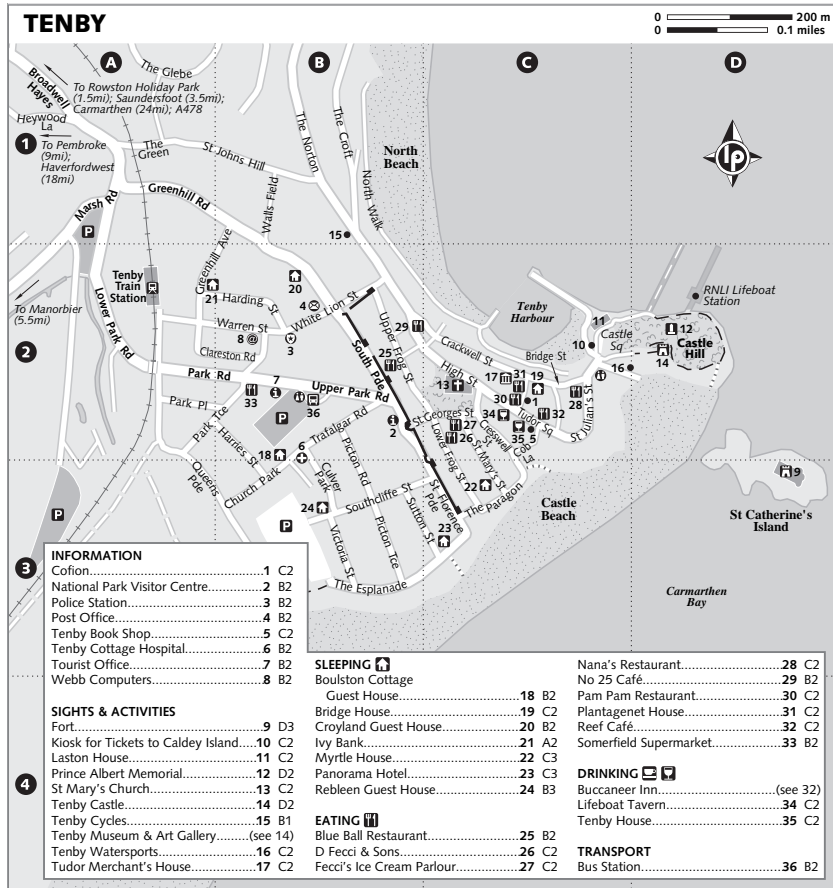
Sleeping

Tenby is overflowing with guesthouses and B&Bs, but be sure to book ahead in summer. It can be difficult to find a single room (unless you pay the price of a double), or to book for just one night on a weekend (owners want to let the room for the whole weekend).

Rowston Holiday Park (☎ 842178; www.rowston-holiday-park.co.uk; New Hedges; sites per tent £10-15; 11 Apr-Sep) There are dozens of caravan and camping sites around Tenby, but this is one of the more attractive ones, just 1.5 miles north of Tenby and only 600m from the coastal path and a sandy beach.

Boulston Cottage Guest House (☎ 843289; 29 Trafalgar Rd; r per person £20-25) Nothing special in the décor stakes, but this little guesthouse, run by a cheerful Spanish-Italian couple, is one of the best budget places in town.

Croyland Guest House (☎ 843880; www.thecroyland.co.uk; 10 Deer Park, Greenhill Rd; r per person £20-30; D) Pine furniture and bold colours – burgundy, purple, green – make this pleasant and friendly guesthouse stand out from the crowd. The



rooms are a little cramped, but are good value and close to the centre.

Myrtle House (☎ 842508; St Mary's St; r per person £28-40; ♪) A great location a few metres from the steps down to Castle Beach; tastefully decorated spacious rooms, great breakfasts and a friendly, helpful owner make this late-Georgian house an attractive place to stay.

Ivy Bank (☎ 842311; www.ivybanktenby.co.uk; Harding St; s/d from £30/60) Swagged curtains, tasselled lamp shades and busy-patterned wallpapers are the order of the day in this traditional – and very comfortable – Victorian B&B, close to the train station and about five minutes' walk from the old town.

Panorama Hotel (☎ 844976; www.tenby-hotel.co.uk; The Esplanade; r per person £35-50) Location, location, location – the pastel décor and floral bedspreads may be standard for Tenby, but the stunning panorama over South Beach and Caldey Island is not. It's worth forking out a few extra quid for a room with a sea view.

Bridge House (☎ 843893; Bridge St; d from £55; ♪ Apr-Oct) This well-kept, whitewashed Georgian house enjoys a top spot overlooking the harbour and has beautifully restored rooms set off by antique furniture. Ask for one of the rooms at the front to make the most of that view.

Rebleen Guest House (☎ 844175; www.rebleen.co.uk; Southcliffe St; d £55-75) This Victorian terraced house, just 300m from the old town, eschews traditional seaside chintz and frilliness for a cleaner, more modern décor of pale pastels and creams with a floral motif.

Eating

No 25 Café (☎ 842544; 25 High St; mains £2-6; ♪ 10am-5pm) An appealing café with marble tables and bentwood chairs, No 25 uses home-baked bread and fresh local produce to create delicious sandwiches, along with good coffee, homemade soup and cakes. It has wi-fi access, too.

Nana's Restaurant (☎ 844536; Bridge St; mains £6-16; ♪ lunch & dinner Jun-Sep, varies Oct-May) Set in a Georgian house overlooking the harbour, Nana's specialises in authentic Italian cuisine, from antipasti (a spread of cured meats, cheeses and olives) to freshly prepared risotto to traditional thin and crispy pizza.

Reef Café (☎ 845258; Vernon House, St Julian's St; mains £12-15) This small and intimate Mediterranean-style bistro-restaurant offers a menu of imaginative seafood and pasta dishes, as well as tasty snacks, cakes and good coffee.

Pam Pam Restaurant (☎ 842946; 2 Tudor Sq; mains £12-17) Smartly decked out with dark wood tables and chairs set off by blue napkins and white walls covered in local artwork and photos, Pam Pam is a local institution and a much loved family restaurant that produces quality dishes such as Moroccan-style lamb chops and baked sea bass, alongside a children's menu of burgers and pasta dishes.

Plantagenet House (☎ 842350; Quay Hill, Tudor Sq; mains £13-22) Tenby's oldest building, tucked away in an alley, houses its most atmospheric restaurant, dominated by an immense Tudor chimney hearth (no less than 6m wide). It's a good place for a romantic, candle-lit dinner, with the menu ranging from seafood to organic beef. The lunch menu, which includes mussels, battered cod and chips, and bangers and mash, is good value.

Blue Ball Restaurant (☎ 843038; Upper Frog St; mains £15-20; ♪ lunch Tue-Sun, dinner Mon-Sat) Polished wood, old timber beams and exposed brickwork create a cosy, rustic atmosphere in what is probably Tenby's best restaurant. The menu makes good use of local produce, notably seafood – try the pan-fried gurnard (a sustainable local species) with champagne-chive cream sauce and saffron mashed potato.

For the best fish and chips in town, head to **D Fecci & Sons** (Lower Frog St), in business since 1935. The same family run the traditional **Fecci's Ice Cream Parlour** (St George's St).

There's a large **Somerfield supermarket** (Upper Park Rd; ♪ 8am-8pm Mon-Sat, 10am-4pm Sun) next to the bus station.

Drinking

There are around two dozen pubs crammed into the area around Tudor Sq, and the place can get pretty riotous on Friday and Saturday nights, with big groups of lads and lasses on pub crawls from one karaoke bar to the next.

Tenby House (☎ 842000; Tudor Sq) Tenby House is a lively hotel bar with cool tunes on Friday and Saturday nights, and a sunny, flower-bedecked courtyard for summer afternoon sessions.

Buccaneer Inn (☎ 842273; St Julian's St) The Buccaneer is a rugby pub, with a loud, up-for-it crowd on match weekends, but it also has the best beer garden in town and serves excellent pub grub.

Lifeboat Tavern (☎ 844948; Tudor Sq) Another appealing old pub set in a Georgian house, the Lifeboat has outdoor tables on the footpath, a beer garden at the back, and live folk and blues music at weekends.

AUTHOR'S CHOICE

If you fancy a spot of luxury after a hard day's hiking on the coast path, head for the **St Brides Spa Hotel** (☎ 01834-812304; www.stbridespahotel.com; St Bride's Hill, Saundersfoot; d £130-250; ♪) in Saundersfoot, a few miles north of Tenby. Pembrokeshire's first boutique hotel offers the chance to relax in the sauna or steam room, or lounge in the infinity-edge pool overlooking the harbour, before dining in the candle-lit cliff-top restaurant (mains £16 to £23). The bedrooms are stylish and modern, with designer bedspreads, oak furniture and local artwork, while the bathrooms have polished limestone, roll-top baths and powerful showers. Rooms are graded Good, Better and Best, with or without a sea view – we recommend a Good Sea View (£180) as being the best trade-off between price and pampering.

Getting There & Away

Silcox Coaches bus 381 runs from Tenby to Haverfordwest (£3, one hour, hourly Monday to Saturday, one on Sunday), where you can change for buses to St David's and Fishguard. To get to Cardigan, take the 381 as far as Narberth and change to the 430 (one hour, two daily Monday to Saturday).

First Cymru bus 349 goes to Haverfordwest via Manorbier and Pembroke (£2.50, 40 minutes, hourly Monday to Saturday).

There's a direct train service to Tenby from Swansea (£10, 1½ hours, seven daily Monday to Saturday, one on Sunday), continuing to Pembroke.

SOUTH PEMBROKESHIRE COAST Manorbier

☎ 01834 / pop 665

Manorbier (pronounced man-er-beer) is a little village of leafy, twisting lanes nestled above a lovely sandy beach. It's home to craggy, lichen-spotted **Manorbier Castle** (☎ 871394; Manorbier; adult/child £3.50/1.50; ♪ 10.30am-5.30pm Easter-Sep), the birthplace of the extraordinary Giralduus Cambrensis (Gerald of Wales). 'In all the broad lands of Wales, Manorbier is the best place by far,' he wrote. The castle starred in the 2003 film *I Capture the Castle*.

The castle buildings, ranging in era from the 12th to 19th centuries, are grouped around a pretty garden, with medieval music playing in the Great Hall. There's a murky dungeon, a smuggler's secret passage, and tableaux of wax figures in period costume – apparently rejects from Madame Tussaud's in London. Look out for the figure that was originally Prince Philip, now sporting a coat of chain mail.

Set on a working farm 1.5 miles west of the village, **Swanlake Bay Farm Guesthouse** (☎ 871204; swanlake@pembrokeshire.com; Westmoor, Manorbier; r per person £24-27; ♪) offers bright and cheery bed-

rooms in a Georgian farmhouse and converted coach house, just 10 minutes' walk from secluded Swanlake beach.

Manorbier Youth Hostel (YHA; ☎ 0870 770 5954; dm £14; ♪ Easter-Oct) is 1.5 miles east of the village centre, close to the beach at Skrinkle Haven, and is housed in a weirdly futuristic ex-Ministry of Defence building.

The **Castle Inn** (☎ 871268; Manorbier) is a classic village pub with a rhododendron-shaded beer garden, a jukebox and occasional guitar and fiddle sessions on weekend evenings.

Manorbier is 5.5 miles southwest of Tenby. First Cymru bus 349 between Tenby and Pembroke stops in the village. There's also a train station, a mile north of the village, served by trains from Swansea to Pembroke.

Bosherston & Stackpole Estate

☎ 01646

The National Trust's **Stackpole Estate** (☎ 661359; admission free; ♪ dawn-dusk) takes in 8 miles of coast, including two fine beaches, a wooded valley and a system of artificial ponds famous for their spectacular display of water lilies. Stackpole was the seat of the Campbells, earls of Cawdor, a family with local roots dating back to medieval times; in the church in nearby Cheriton are 14th-century effigies of Richard de Stackpole and his wife, and Lord Cawdor, who featured in the French invasion of Fishguard (see the Last Invasion of Britain, p193). In the 18th and 19th centuries they created this elegant park.

A car park in Bosherston village gives access to the famous **Bosherston Lily Ponds** (at their best in June), criss-crossed by a network of footpaths and wooden bridges; parts are accessible by wheelchair. The ponds are home to otters, herons and more than 20 species of dragonfly, while the ruins of the manor house are inhabited.

A mile southeast of Bosherton village is the beautiful golden beach of **Broadhaven South**, framed by grey limestone cliffs and pointed sea stacks.

The tiny harbour of **Stackpole Quay**, just over a mile east of the lily ponds, marks the point where pink and purple sandstone gives way to the massive grey limestone that dominates the South Pembrokeshire coast from here to Freshwater West. There's a National Trust car park with information leaflets, and a good tearoom.

A 10-minute walk south along the coast path from Stackpole Quay leads to **Barafundle Bay**, regularly voted one of Britain's most beautiful beaches. Scenic it certainly is, but its reputation has put paid to seclusion – on summer weekends it can get pretty crowded. Go on a weekday in spring, though, and you might have the place to yourself.

SLEEPING & EATING

Trefalen Farm (% 661643; Bosherton; r per person £25, sites per person £3) A mile southeast of Bosherton, near Broadhaven South beach, this 17th-century farmhouse offers B&B and a basic camp site.

St Petrox Caravan & Camping Site (% 683980; Old Rectory, St Petrox; sites per tent £5) Close to the church in St Petrox village, midway between Pembroke and Bosherton, this is a basic but attractive camp site with showers; fresh eggs, milk and bread are sold.

St Govan's Country Inn (% 661455; Bosherton; r per person £30) This friendly village pub in the centre of Bosherton has good B&B accommodation above a convivial bar decorated with hair-raising photos of rock climbs on the local sea cliffs; it's popular with climbers attracted by excellent curries and a range of real ales. Mains cost £5 to 9.

Ye Olde Worlde Café (% 661216; Bosherton; mains £2-5; 11am-6.30pm, to 9pm Jul & Aug) Better known as Ma Weston's, this appealing café is set in an old, ivy-covered coastguard cottage. It's a popular hang-out for rock climbers, and serves hearty fried breakfasts, teacakes and crumpets.

Boathouse Tearoom (Stackpole Quay; mains £5-8; 11am-Easter-Oct) A pleasant little café with outdoor tables in the courtyard, the Boathouse has a surprisingly upmarket menu that includes smoked duck salad and fresh crab sandwiches, as well as coffee, Devonshire teas and cakes.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Bosherton is 5 miles south of Pembroke. The Coastal Cruiser (387/362) bus runs from

Pembroke to Stackpole Quay and Bosherton (40 minutes, three daily, no Sunday service October to April).

St Govan's Head & Stack Rocks

The southern coast of Pembrokeshire around St Govan's Head boasts some of the most harshly beautiful coastline in the country, with sheer cliffs dropping 50m into churning, thrashing surf. Unfortunately, much of this coastline lies within the Ministry of Defence's Castlemartin firing range and is off limits to the public. Two minor roads run south to the coast at St Govan's Head and Stack Rocks; when the range is in use these roads are closed. You can check whether the roads, and the section of coast path that links them, are open by calling % 01646-662287, or by checking the notices posted at the Olde Worlde Café in Bosherton.

From the car park at the end of the St Govan's Head road, steps hacked into the rock lead down to tiny **St Govan's Chapel**, wedged into a slot in the cliffs just out of reach of the sea. The chapel dates from the 5th or 6th century, and is named for an itinerant 6th-century Irish preacher. The story goes that one day, when he was set upon by thieves, the cliff conveniently opened and enfolded him, protecting him from his attackers; in gratitude he built this chapel on the spot. The waters from St Govan's well (now dried out), just below the chapel, were reputed to cure skin and eye complaints.

A 10-minute walk along the coast path to the west leads to a spectacular gash in the cliffs known as **Huntsman's Leap**, its vertical walls often dotted with rock climbers.

The car park at **Stack Rocks**, 3 miles to the west, gives access to even more spectacular cliff scenery, including the **Green Bridge of Wales**, the biggest natural arch in the country.

Freshwater West

Wild and windblown Freshwater West, a 2-mile strand of golden sand and silver shingle backed by acres of dunes, is Wales' best surfing beach, wide open to the Atlantic rollers; each year in September it hosts the Welsh National Surfing Championships. But beware – although it's great for surfing, big waves and powerful rips make it dangerous for swimming; several people have drowned here. The beach has year-round red-flag status – do not swim here!

Outer Reef Surf School (% 01646-680070; www.outerreefsurfschool.com; 11 Maidenwells, Pembroke) runs courses here, and at Newgale, Broadhaven

and Manorbier; prices start at £25 for a two-hour beginner's session.

If you're hiking the Coast Path, be aware that the **Old Rectory** (% 01646-661677; www.theoldrectory.web.com; Castlemartin; r per person £32), 2 miles east of Freshwater West, is the only accommodation between Bosherton and Angle. It also has meals (three-course dinner for £19).

Angle

Stuck at the western extremity of South Pembrokeshire, the village of Angle feels a long way off the beaten track. The main attraction is the tiny beach in **West Angle Bay**, which has great views across the mouth of Milford Haven to St Ann's Head, and offers good coastal walks with lots of rock pools to explore.

On the eastern edge of the village, right on the Coast Path, the **Castle Farm Camping Site** (% 01646-641220; per tent £5) offers very basic facilities for campers among the ruins.

Continue past the farm on a very rough road to find **Old Point House** (% 01646-641205; The Point; s/d £30/60), a 15th-century cottage part built with shipwreck timbers, which serves locally caught seafood (mains £8 to £13, open lunch and dinner, closed Tuesday November to March) and has four rooms overlooking the sea.

PEMBROKE (PENFRO)

% 01646 / pop 7400

Pembroke is not much more than a single street of neat Georgian and Victorian houses sitting beneath a whopping great castle – the oldest in west Wales, seat of the Tudor dynasty and birthplace of King Henry VII.

Arnulph de Montgomery (Arnulf of Montgomery) built a castle here in 1093. In 1154 local traders scored a coup when a Royal Act of Incorporation made it illegal to land goods anywhere in the Milford Haven waterway except at Pembroke (now Pembroke Dock). In 1648, during the Civil War, the castle was besieged for 48 days before it fell, after which Cromwell had the town walls demolished.

Orientation & Information

The 700m-long Main St stretches east from the prominent castle. The main bus stops are at the castle entrance and outside Somerfield supermarket on Main St. The train station is 800m east of the castle. Pembroke Dock is a separate town, 2 miles to the northwest.

Ferries from Rosslare in Ireland arrive at Pembroke Dock, Pembroke Dock has its own

train station, two-thirds of a mile east from the ferry terminal.

Dragon Alley (% 621456; 63 Main St; 11am-5pm Tue-Sat; per hr £3) Internet access.

Pembroke Bookshop (% 685144; 73 Main St) Independent bookshop with a good selection of local maps and guides.

Pembroke Library (% 682973; 38 Main St; 11am-1pm Tue-Sat & 2-5pm Tue & Fri, 2-7pm Thu) Free internet access.

Tourist Office (% 622388; Common Rd; 11am-5.30pm Apr-Oct) Has a lively exhibition on the history of the town.

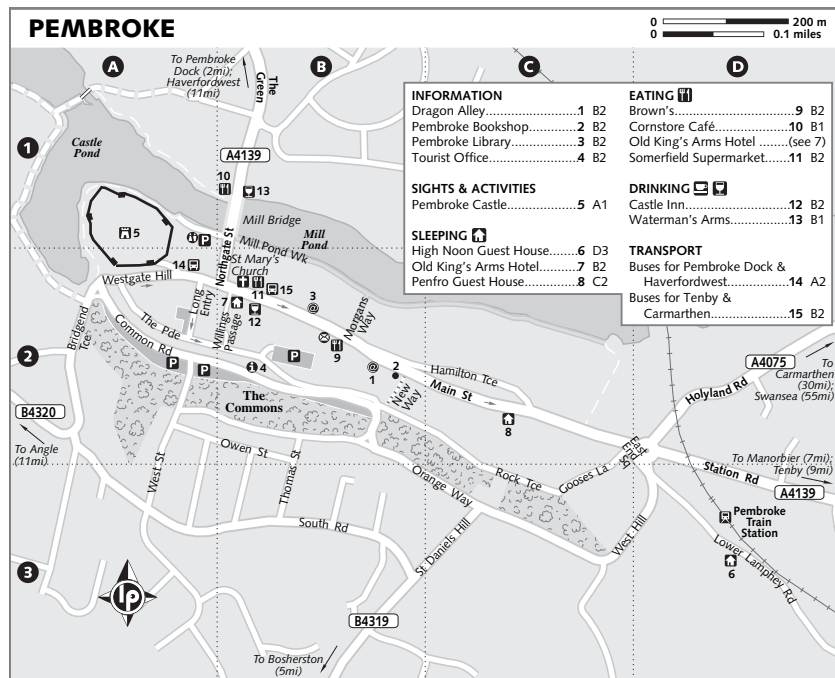
Sights

The spectacular and forbidding **Pembroke Castle** (% 681510; www.pembrokecastle.co.uk; Main St; adult/child £3.50/2.50; 11am-9.30am-6pm Apr-Sep, 10am-5pm Mar & Oct, 10am-4pm Nov-Feb) was the home of the earls of Pembroke for over 300 years. A fort was established here in 1093 by Arnulph de Montgomery, but most of the present buildings date from the 12th and 13th centuries; the sinister, looming keep is the oldest part, built in 1200. Guided tours are available from May to August.

It's a great place for kids to explore – wall walks and passages run from tower to tower, and there are vivid exhibitions detailing the castle's history. In one, a tableau commemorates the birth here in 1456 of Henry Tudor, who defeated Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth Field in 1485 to become King Henry VII. One hundred steps lead to the top of the massive **keep**, where there are great views over the town.

Next to the keep is the **Duneger Tower**, where you can peer down into the dank, dark prison cell. Nearby, with access through the Northern Hall, are steps down to the creepy **Wogan Cavern**, a massive natural cave that was partially walled in by the Normans and probably used as a store and boathouse.

Pembroke Dock, on the Cleddau River to the north of Pembroke, was once the site of a Royal Dockyard – between 1814 and 1926 more than 260 ships were built here for the Royal Navy. It also served as a Royal Air Force (RAF) base for flying boats during WWII and after. Today it's a ferry terminal and commercial port, but some of its history survives in the **Gun Tower Museum** (% 622246; adult/child £2/1; 11am-4pm Apr-Sep), housed in a 19th-century Martello tower that was built to defend the harbour from possible attack by French invaders. There was rather an unfair distribution of space here – 33 men slept in hammocks in



one room, while the officer got the other room all to himself. A walkway now runs from the shore but when the tower was in use the men had to lower a rope ladder for supplies.

Silcox buses 356 and 357 shuttle between Pembroke and Pembroke Dock (10 minutes, every 20 minutes Monday to Saturday) from opposite the castle entrance.

Sleeping

High Noon Guest House (☎ 683736; www.highnoon.co.uk; Lower Lamphey Rd; s/d from £20/46) Handy for Pembroke train station, and offering good value rather than atmosphere, this modern house has decent, though smallish, rooms with a pleasant garden terrace out back.

Old King's Arms Hotel (☎ 683611; www.oldkingsarms.hotel.co.uk; Main St; s/d £40/70; P) The town's oldest inn, dating back to the 16th century, has unexceptional but well-appointed rooms, and a good restaurant.

Penfro Guest House (☎ 682753; www.penfro.co.uk; 111 Main St; s/d £55/65) Austerly elegant from the outside, this large Georgian town house is a delight inside, retaining many of its original 18th-century features, including 250-year-

old glass, Georgian wood panelling, moulded plaster ceilings and period fireplaces. Rooms are not en suite, as the owner has decided not to destroy original features. The Burgundy Room (£80) is the one to ask for – a huge double with a roll-top bath actually *in* the bedroom (toilet along the hall). You can take breakfast – cooked on an Aga, naturally – on a terrace overlooking the huge garden.

Eating & Drinking

Cornstore Café (☎ 684290; North Quay; mains £3-5; 11am-5pm) Housed in an 18th-century granary on the waterside, this café conjures up delicious lunches – daily specials include home-made soups and hot dishes such as lasagne – as well as Italian coffee, homemade cakes and dairy ice cream.

Brown's (☎ 682419; Main St; mains £3-10; 11am-5.30pm Mon-Sat) A splendidly time warped, 1960s greasy-spoon café, Brown's has upholstered booths lurking beyond the fish-and-chip counter, where you can tuck into sausage, egg and chips, washed down with a cup of tea.

(Continued on page 181)

(Continued from page 172)

Old King's Arms Hotel (☎ 683611; Main St; mains £13-18) Dark timber beams, ochre walls and polished copperware lend a country kitchen atmosphere to the restaurant here, with local specialities such as braised lamb shank in red-wine sauce, pan-fried fillet of black beef with wild mushrooms, and daily seafood specials.

Waterman's Arms (☎ 682718; 2 The Green) This waterside pub has an outdoor terrace that's a suntrap on a summer afternoon, with fine views across the millpond to the castle.

Castle Inn (☎ 682883; 17 Main St) This snug local pub, all bare stone and horse brasses, is good for a quiet afternoon pint, but it fairly livens up in the evenings as a youngish crowd gathers for a night on the town.

Self-caterers can stock up at the **Somerfield supermarket** (6/10 Main St; 11am-8pm Mon-Sat, 10am-4pm Sun).

Getting There & Away

BOAT

For details of ferries between Pembroke and Rosslare (Ireland), see p324. The ferry terminal is in Pembroke Dock, 2 miles northwest of Pembroke town centre.

BUS

Note that Pembroke is not the same as Pembroke Dock. Some regional bus services go to one or the other but not both. Most buses heading from Pembroke town to Pembroke Dock and Haverfordwest depart from Westgate Hill near the castle entrance; those bound for Tenby and Carmarthen go from Main St outside Somerfield supermarket.

First Cymru bus 349 runs from Pembroke to Haverfordwest (45 minutes, hourly Monday to Saturday, three to five on Sunday) and, in the opposite direction, to Tenby (45 minutes).

The Coastal Cruiser (387) bus service runs in a loop south from Pembroke (three daily, no Sunday service October to April), taking in Angle, Bosherton, Stackpole Quay and Freshwater East.

TRAIN

There are direct trains from Swansea to Pembroke (£10, 2½ hours, every two hours Monday to Saturday, one on Sunday) and Pembroke Dock via Carmarthen and Tenby.

AROUND PEMBROKE

Looming romantically over the River Carew, its gaping windows reflected in the glassy water, craggy **Carew Castle** (☎ 01646-651782; www.careycastle.com; Carew; adult/child £3/2; 11am-5pm Apr-Oct) is an impressive sight. These rambling limestone ruins range from functional 12th-century fortification (built by Gerald de Windsor, Henry I's constable of Pembroke) to Elizabethan country house.

Abandoned in 1690, the castle is now inhabited by a large number of bats, including the protected greater horseshoe bat. A summer programme of events includes battle re-enactments and open-air theatre. Near the castle entrance is the 11th-century **Carew Cross**, one of the oldest and grandest around – it's impossibly tall and covered in psychedelic Celtic squiggles. The castle ticket also gives you admission to **Carew Tidal Mill**, the only working tidal mill in Wales, built in Elizabethan times.

The nearby **Carew Inn** (☎ 01646-651267; Carew; mains £8-13) serves lunch and dinner, and has a beer garden overlooking the castle.

Carew is 4.5 miles east of Pembroke and 6 miles west of Tenby. First Cymru's 349 Pembroke-Tenby bus stops here.

WEST PEMBROKESHIRE

HAVERFORDWEST (HWLFFORDD)

☎ 01437 / pop 10,800

Haverfordwest is a bustling no-nonsense town, a thriving shopping centre and public transport hub. Though it retains some fine Georgian buildings, it lacks the prettiness and historic atmosphere of many of its Pembrokeshire neighbours. It grew up around a shallow spot on the Western Cleddau River where it was possible to ford the stream, and takes its name from the Old English term *haefer* (billy goat) – this was the western *haefer* ford, the place where drovers crossed the river with their goats.

Founded as a fortified Flemish settlement by the Norman Lord Gilbert de Clare in about 1110, its castle became the nucleus for a thriving market and its port remained important until the railway arrived in the mid-19th century.

Orientation

The old town centre is a compact maze of narrow streets and alleys between the two main road bridges over the river, with Castle Hill on the west bank. A one-way system runs

clockwise around the centre, on High St, Dew St, Bank St and Cartlett Rd.

The bus station and tourist office are on the east side of the river, close to the pedestrianised Old Bridge at the north end of the Riverside shopping centre. The train station is 400m east of the town centre, just off the A4067/A40 Narberth Rd.

Information

Haverfordwest Library (☎ 775244; Dew St;

☎ 9.30am-5pm Mon, Wed & Thu, 9.30am-7pm Tue & Fri, 9.30am-1pm Sat) Free internet access.

Police Station (☎ 763355; Merlin's Hill)

Post Office (12 Quay St)

Tourist Office (☎ 763110; Old Bridge St;

☎ 10am-5.30pm Apr-Oct, 10am-4pm Nov-Mar)

Withybush Hospital (☎ 764545; Fishguard Rd)

Sights

The meagre ruins of **Haverfordwest Castle** brood over the river above the Old Bridge. The castle survived an onslaught by Owain Glyndŵr in 1405, but according to one local story was abandoned by its Royalist garrison during the Civil War when its soldiers mistook a herd of cows for Roundheads.

Haverfordwest Town Museum (☎ 763087; adult/child £1/free; ☎ 10am-4pm Mon-Sat Apr-Oct) has an interesting display on the town's history, complete with a boil-ridden plague victim and an interesting section on local nicknames – a study has recorded 700 evocative endearments, such as Arse and Pockets, Drips and Stinko. The museum is housed in the old town jail in the castle's outer ward – it was here that the unsuccessful French invasion force was imprisoned in 1797 (see the Last Invasion of England, p193).

An excellent **farmers market** is held in the Riverside shopping centre every second Friday from 9am to 3pm.

Sleeping & Eating

College Guest House (☎ 763710; www.collegeguesthouse.com; 93 Hill St; s/d/tr £40/60/72; i) Set in a spacious Georgian townhouse close to the town centre, the College goes for the antique-pine-and-earthy-colours look, and has no fewer than eight en-suite rooms, including a family room with a double and two singles (£80).

Wilton House Hotel (☎ 760033; www.wiltonhousehotel.com; 6 Quay St; s/d from £40/65) Another central place housed in a Georgian building, the Wilton House has bland but comfortable

modern rooms, and a decent restaurant that spills out into a large walled garden.

Georges (☎ 766683; 24 Market St; mains £5-8; ☎ 10am-5.30pm Mon-Sat) When it comes to places to eat, the Georges wins hands down – this cosy nook of stained glass and candlelight, lanterns and fairy lights, boasts a simple menu of home-cooked food, from seafood crêpe to steak-and-ale pie to sticky toffee pie with clotted cream. There's wine by the glass, and a separate menu for those with allergies or food intolerances.

Moon & Sixpence (☎ 767851; Swan Sq; mains £3-5; ☎ 9am-4.30pm Mon-Sat) Set in the top floor of a gift shop, this popular local café serves good coffee, cakes and pastries, salads, and pitta and tortilla sandwiches with a huge range of fillings.

Getting There & Away

BUS

Richards Brothers' bus 411 runs to St David's (£3.50, 40 minutes, hourly Monday to Saturday), while 412 runs to Fishguard (40 minutes, hourly Monday to Saturday); both stop at the train station as well as the bus station.

First Cymru's bus 349 goes to Pembroke (£3, 40 minutes, hourly Monday to Saturday, three to five Sunday) and Tenby (1½ hours). Silcox bus 322 runs to Carmarthen (£4.50, one hour, three daily Monday to Saturday).

National Express coach 508 runs direct from London Victoria (£26, seven hours, twice daily) to Haverfordwest via Chepstow, Swansea, Carmarthen, Tenby and Pembroke. National Express also runs coach 528 from Swansea to Haverfordwest (£8, 2¼ hours, one daily).

TRAIN

There are direct trains to Haverfordwest from Cardiff (£16, 2½ hours, every two hours) via Swansea (£10, 1½ hours).

WEST PEMBROKESHIRE COAST

St Bride's Bay (Bae Sain Ffraid) is the great scoop of coast cradled between the arms of the St Ann's Head and St David's Head peninsulas. Its west-facing shore is lined with some of the best beaches in Wales, and dotted with cute little villages.

All the villages and beaches around the bay can be reached using the Puffin Shuttle bus service, which runs from Haverfordwest to St David's via Martin's Haven, Little Haven, Broad Haven, Druidston, Newgale Beach and Solva (three daily Easter to September). The winter service runs on Tuesday, Thursday

and Saturday only, and does not go to Martin's Haven.

St Ann's Head

The southern peninsula is much less frequented than crowded St David's, probably because of its proximity to the oil refineries of Milford Haven. But there is some great coastal walking to be enjoyed, notably out to St Ann's Head itself, and around **Wooltack Point** at the western tip of the peninsula.

At **Martin's Haven**, the tiny harbour that is the jumping-off point for boat trips to Skomer and Skokholm islands, you can visit **Lockley Lodge** (☎ 9.30am-12.15pm & 12.45-4.30pm Apr-Sep), a Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales visitor centre with remote-control TV screens that allow you to watch wildlife activity on Skomer.

Marloes Sands Youth Hostel (☎ 01646-636667; Runwayskiln, Marloes; dm £9.50; ☎ Easter-Oct) is housed in a group of National Trust-owned farm buildings near the Coast Path.

Skomer, Skokholm & Grassholm Islands

The rocky islands that lie in the turbulent, tide-ripped waters at the south end of St Bride's Bay are one of the richest wildlife environments in Britain. In the nesting season, Skomer and Skokholm islands are home to more than half a million sea birds, including guillemots, razorbills, puffins, storm petrels, and the world's largest colony of Manx shearwaters – 120,000 birds, 40% of the world population. These unusual birds nest in burrows, and after a day spent feeding at sea return to their nests under the cover of darkness.

Further offshore, on tiny Grassholm Island, is the third-largest gannet colony in the UK, with 32,500 breeding pairs. Grey seals are also plentiful on Skomer, especially in the pupping season (September).

Skomer and Skokholm Islands are nature reserves run by the **Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales** (WTSWW; ☎ 01437-765462; www.welshwildlife.org), while the surrounding waters are protected by Wales' only marine nature reserve. Boat trips to Skomer depart from Martin's Haven (adult/child £8/6) Tuesday to Sunday (plus bank holiday Mondays) from April to October, weather permitting, at 10am, 11am and noon, with return trips leaving the island between 3pm and 4pm. If you go ashore, there's also a landing fee of £6 for adults (children under 16 are free). These boat trips are first come, first served.

Grassholm is owned by the **Royal Society for the Protection of Birds** (RSPB; www.rspb.org.uk) and landing is not permitted, but from April to August **Dale Sailing Co** (☎ 01646-603123; www.dale-sailing.co.uk) runs three-hour, round-the-island trips (£25 per person) departing Martin's Haven at 2pm on Mondays only, on which you may also see seals, porpoises and dolphins.

From April to September Dale Sailing Co operates a range of boat trips out of Martin's Haven; for example, one-hour round-the-island trips (adult/child £8/6) with commentary, and an evening cruise (£10/7) that offers the opportunity to see (and hear – the noise can be deafening) the huge flocks of Manx shearwaters returning to their nests.

For keen bird-watchers, there is cottage and bunkhouse accommodation on Skomer and Skokholm (£175 per person for three nights, fully catered); you can book through www.welshwildlife.org.

Little Haven

Little Haven is Broad Haven's more upmarket neighbour, with a tiny shingle beach and a cluster of pastel-painted holiday cottages. The slipway is much used by local dive boats; if you're tempted, the **West Wales Dive Centre** (☎ 01437-781457; www.westwalesdivers.co.uk; Hasguard Cross) offers a one-day Discover Scuba course.

Nest Bistro (☎ 01437-781728; 12 Grove Pt; mains £12-16; ☎ 7-10pm Tue-Sat) is an informal little restaurant that specialises in locally caught seafood, including lobster, crab, sea bass, turbot and plaice.

Broad Haven

Broad Haven, tucked into the southern corner of St Bride's Bay, is a traditional bucket-and-spade family resort, with a sandy beach backed by tearooms, gift shops, and places selling rubber rings, water wings and boogie boards.

Haven Sports (☎ 01437-781354; www.havensports.co.uk; Marine Rd), at the south end of the prom behind the Galleon Inn, rents wetsuits, body boards and surfboards.

Broad Haven Youth Hostel (YHA; ☎ 0870 770 5278; dm £14; ☎ Easter-Oct) is a purpose-built hostel housed in a sprawling modern bungalow close to the beach.

Newgale Beach

Newgale is the biggest beach in St Bride's Bay. If the north end, next to Newgale village, is too busy, just walk south. It's one of the best beaches in South Wales for beginning surfers to

AUTHOR'S CHOICE

The **Druidstone Hotel** (% 01437-781221; www.druidstone.co.uk; Druidston Haven; r per person £39-65) sits perched above the secluded cove of Druidston Haven in the middle of a glorious stretch of coastline. It's a rambling, family-oriented hotel (pets welcome) set high above the sea, with a range of idiosyncratic accommodation, from brightly painted attic rooms with cushion-strewn window seats to self-catering cottage accommodation. Our favourite is the pine-panelled South Roof Room, with its giant bed and private balcony where you can sit and watch the sunset. Druidston is 2 miles north of Broad Haven.

learn on, and you can hire surfboards, surf skis, boogie boards and wetsuits from **Newsurf Hire Centre** (% 01437-721398; www.newsurf.co.uk; Newgale).

ST DAVID'S (TYDDEWI)

% 01437 / pop 1800

Featured in the *Guinness Book of Records* as the smallest city in the UK – population-wise it's little more than an overgrown village – St David's was awarded the title of 'city' courtesy of its magnificent cathedral. Known in Welsh as Tydewwi (the House of David), this is the holiest site in Wales; birth- and burial-place of the nation's patron saint, the cradle of Welsh Christianity and a place of pilgrimage for more than 1500 years.

St David founded a monastic community here in the 6th century, only a short walk from where he was born at St Non's Bay. In 1124, Pope Calixtus II declared that two pilgrimages to St David's were the equivalent of one to Rome, and three to St David's were equal to one to Jerusalem. The cathedral has seen a constant stream of visitors ever since.

Today, St David's attracts hordes of non religious pilgrims too, drawn by the town's laid-back vibe and the excellent hiking, surfing and wildlife-watching in the surrounding area.

Orientation & Information

The centre of town is Cross Sq, with the cathedral 200m to the northwest. The main bus stops are in New St and the National Park Visitor Centre car park.

The main car park is at the eastern edge of town, next to the tourist office (£3 a day). In summer there's a free park-and-ride shuttle bus

(every 15 minutes from 10am to 4pm in July and August, 11am to 3pm June and September) from here to the Merrivale car park (with level access to the cathedral and Bishop's Palace).

Bench Bar (% 721778; 11 High St; £1.50 per 30 min; h 10am-8pm) Coffee bar with internet café and wi-fi hotspot.

National Park Visitor Centre (% 720392; The Grove; h 9.30am-5.30pm Easter-Oct, 10am-4pm Mon-Sat Nov-Easter) A striking landscaped building next to the car park, 350m east of the square; it includes a tourist office. It will be relocated to town centre until summer 2008 for building work.

National Trust Visitor Centre (% 720385; Captain's House, High St; h 10am-5.30pm Apr-Oct, 10am-4.30pm Mon-Sat, 10am-3pm Sun Nov-Mar) Sells local-interest books and guides to NT properties in Pembrokeshire.

Police Station (% 0845 330 2000; High St) Part-time station; not always open.

Post Office (13 New St)

St David's Bookshop (5a The Pebbles; h 11am-5pm Mon-Sat) Sells local maps and guidebooks.

Sights

ST DAVID'S CATHEDRAL

Walking from the town centre into the cathedral precinct you pass through the 13th-century gatehouse of **Porth y Twr** (adult/child £1/free; h 10.30am-5.30pm Mon-Sat Jul-Sep, 11am-5pm Feb-Jun & Oct), which houses an exhibition about St David and the cathedral. There are some interesting carved stones here, notably the 11th-century **Abraham Stone**, carved with Celtic interlace designs, which once marked the grave of Hedd and Isaac, sons of Bishop Abraham, who was murdered by Viking invaders in 1080.

Filling the valley beyond the gatehouse, **St David's Cathedral** (www.stdavids cathedral.org.uk; donation invited; h 8am-6pm, depending on services) is an impressive sight. Massive and foursquare, its multicoloured stones of purple, gold and green mottled with lichen, it seems as much fortress as church. Built on the site of a 6th-century

chapel, the building you see dates mainly from the 12th to the 14th centuries. The valley site was chosen in the vain hope that the church would be hidden from Viking raiders, but it was ransacked at least seven times.

The sloping, boggy ground on which the cathedral sits caused problems, made worse by an earthquake in 1248. Extensive works were carried out in the 19th century by Sir George Gilbert Scott, architect of the Albert Memorial and St Pancras in London, to stabilise the building and repair damage caused by subsidence. The distinctive **west front**, with its four pointed towers of purple stone, dates from this period.

As you enter the **nave**, the oldest surviving part of the cathedral, the first things you notice are the sloping floor and the outward lean of the massive, purplish-grey pillars linked by semicircular Norman arches, a result of subsidence. Above is a richly carved 16th-century oak ceiling, adorned with pendants and bosses.

At the far end of the nave is a delicately carved 14th-century Gothic **pulpitum** (the screen wall between nave and choir), which bears a statue of St David dressed as a medieval bishop, and contains the tomb of Bishop

Henry Gower (died 1347), for whom the Bishop's Palace was built.

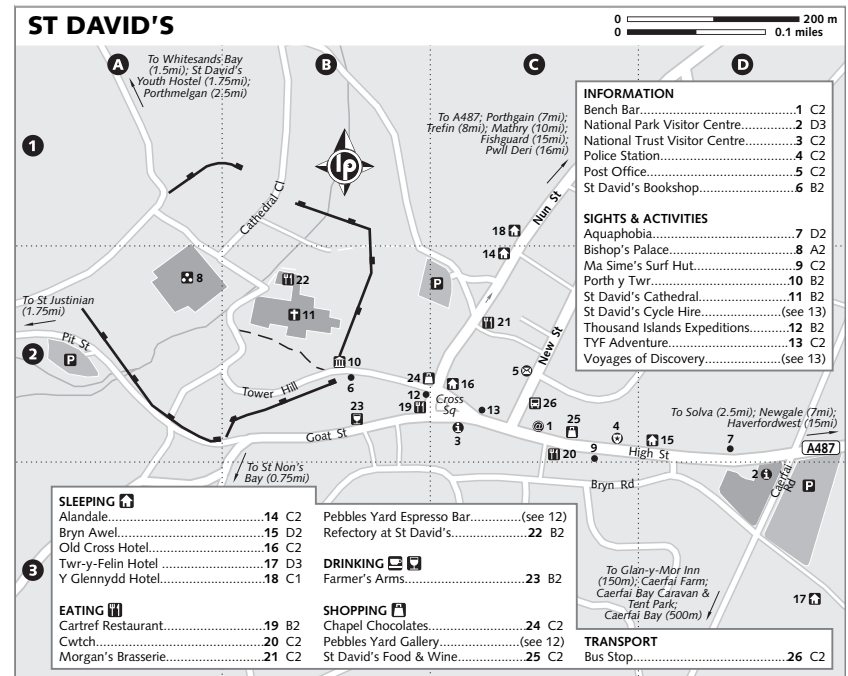
Beyond the pulpitum is the magnificent **choir**; check out the mischievous carved figures on the 16th-century misericords, one of which depicts pilgrims being seasick over the side of a boat. Don't forget to look up at the colourfully painted lantern tower above (those steel tie rods around the walls were installed in the 19th century to hold the structure together).

In a recess in the **Holy Trinity Chapel** at the east end of the cathedral is the object of all those religious pilgrimages – a simple oak casket that contains the bones of St David and St Justinian. The chapel ceiling is distinguished by superb fan vaulting dating from the early 16th century.

Lord Rhys ap Gruffydd, the greatest of the princes of South Wales, and his son Rhys Gryg are known to be buried in the cathedral, although their effigies in the south choir aisle date only from the 14th century. Gerald of Wales, an early rector of the cathedral, is said to be buried here; there is a gravestone, but scholars suggest he is buried at Lincolnshire Cathedral.

TOP FIVE SURFING BEACHES IN SOUTH WALES

- Freshwater West (p170)
- Newgale (p183)
- Whitesands (p189)
- Manorbier (p169)
- Rhossili (p154)



You'll need at least half a day to do justice to the cathedral and the Bishop's Palace. In July and August there are 90-minute **guided tours** (% 720691; adult/child £4/1.20) at 2.30pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday; at other times, tours can be arranged in advance. The one led by the dean himself, a history and archaeology scholar, is recommended.

BISHOP'S PALACE

Across the river from the cathedral lies the **Bishop's Palace** (Cadw; adult/child £2.90/2.50; 11am-6pm Jun-Sep, 9.30am-5pm Apr, May & Oct, 9.30am-4pm Mon-Sat, 11am-4pm Sun Nov-Mar), a vast and stately ruin inhabited by noisy jackdaws. The scale of the building is eloquent testimony to the wealth and power of the medieval church. It was begun in the 12th century, at the same time as the cathedral, but its final, imposing form owes most to Henry Gower, bishop from 1327 to 1348.

Its most distinctive feature is the arcaded parapet that runs around the courtyard, decorated with a chequerboard pattern of purple and yellow stone blocks. The corbels that support the arches are richly adorned with a menagerie of carved figures – lions, monkeys, dogs and birds, as well as grotesque mythical creatures and human heads. The distinctive purple sandstone, also used in the cathedral, comes from Caerbwly Bay, a mile southeast of St David's.

The palace courtyard provides a spectacular setting for open-air plays in summer; ask at the tourist office in the National Park Visitor Centre for details.

Activities WALKING

You can put together coastal walks of all lengths starting from Caerfai Bay, three-quarters of a mile south of town, and following the coastal path to Porthclais (2 miles), St Justinian (6.5 miles) or Whitesands Bay (8.5 miles), returning to town on the Celtic Coaster bus (see p188).

The section from Porthclais to St Justinian is especially fine, with wild coastal scenery, plenty of wildlife (look out for seals, porpoises, sparrowhawks, coughts, gannets and cormorants) and views across turbulent Ramsey Sound to Ramsey Island.

CYCLING

There is pleasant cycling on minor roads around the peninsula – the Celtic Way cycle route passes through St David's – but no off-road action (the coast path is for walkers

only). You can rent bikes from **St David's Cycle Hire** (% 721911; 1 High St; per half-/full day £10/15), **Glan-y-Mor Inn** (% 721788; www.glan-y-mor.co.uk; Caerfai Rd; per day £5) or **Cycle Hire Pembrokeshire** (% 07875 775323; Trefochlyd Farm, Croesgoch; per day £12); the latter is on the A487 road 5 miles northeast of St David's.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

TYF Adventure (% 721611, 0800 132588; www.tyf.com; 1 High St) organises coasteering, surfing, sea-kayaking and rock-climbing trips, charging £45/85 for a half-/full-day.

Ma Sime's Surf Hut (% 720433; 28 High St) rents wetsuits, surfboards and body boards, and can arrange surf lessons with Whitesands Surf School (p189).

For details of boat trips to and around Ramsey Island see p188.

Festivals & Events

The **St David's Cathedral Festival** (www.stdavidscathedral.org.uk/festivals.htm) takes place over nine days, culminating on the Spring Bank Holiday weekend at the end of May, with classical music in the cathedral. Many other concerts are performed at the cathedral throughout the year.

The **St David's Arts Festival** (% 837034), held during the first two weeks in August, features Shakespeare at the Bishop's Palace, prose and poetry readings, and a very child-friendly programme. August also sees a sand-church competition at Whitesands Bay, judged by the dean of the cathedral (dates are weather-dependent).

St David's Day (1 March) is celebrated with a market and exhibition on Cross Sq, a guided walk from the National Park Visitor Centre and a choral Eucharist in the cathedral in the evening.

Sleeping BUDGET

Glan-y-Mor Inn (% 721788; Caerfai Rd; sites per person from £5) This guesthouse has a basic tent-only camp site.

Caerfai Farm (% 720548; www.cawscerfai.co.uk; sites per tent & 2 people £8-10; 11 late-May-Sep) This is a tent-only site with fantastic sea views, set on an organic dairy farm where you can buy fresh cheese, bread and basic camping supplies.

Caerfai Bay Caravan & Tent Park (% 720274; www.caerfaibay.co.uk; sites per tent, car & 2 people £9-12) A 15-minute walk south of town (on the right

at the end of Caerfai Rd), this large site has good facilities and great coastal views across St Brides Bay.

St David's Youth Hostel (YHA; % 0870 770 6042; Llaethdy, Whitesands; dm £11; 11 Easter-Oct) The youth hostel, tucked beneath Carn Llidi 2 miles northwest of town, is set in a former farmhouse, with snug dorms in the old cow sheds. It's close to the beach and coastal path at Whitesands Bay.

Bryn Awel (% 720082; www.brynowel-bb.co.uk; 45 High St; d £50) A pretty little terraced house on the main street, Bryn Awel has small but cosy rooms (all en suite). The owners are keen outdoors enthusiasts, and can advise on the best local spots for walking and bird-watching.

MIDRANGE

Y Glennydd Hotel (% 720576; www.yglennydd.co.uk; 51 Nun St; s/d from £30/55) This small, 10-room hotel feels more like a large B&B, with smallish, smartly decorated but unfussy bedrooms, a cosy lounge with 'mine-host' bar and nautical knick-knacks, and an attractive restaurant serving evening meals as well as breakfast.

Alandale (% 720404; 43 Nun St; s/d £33/65) A neat terraced house built in the 1880s for coast-guard officers, the Alandale has a bright, cheerful atmosphere – ask for one of the rooms at the back, which are quieter and have good views over the countryside.

Tw-y-Felin Hotel (% 721678; www.tyf.com; Caerfai Rd; s/d £40/80; p) Set in a rambling old building (once a windmill – you can climb up into the old tower for some stupendous views) with a wood-pannelled lobby, marble fireplaces and creaky-floored corridors, the Tw-y-Felin has a laid-back vibe – rooms with comfy mattresses and crisp cotton sheets (but no TVs), big healthy breakfasts (no fry-ups), and chilled, surf-dude staff (it's owned by TYF Adventure, p186).

Glan-y-Mor Inn (% 721788; www.glan-y-mor.co.uk; Caerfai Rd; d £50-70) This friendly guesthouse and bar, complete with beer garden and barbecue, has three comfortable double rooms; a family of five can squeeze into the largest. You can hire wetsuits, surfboards and body boards here, and even take surf lessons (£20 a session).

TOP END

Old Cross Hotel (% 720387; www.oldcrosshotel.co.uk; Cross Sq; s/d £62/105; p) An attractive, ivy-clad stone building set in a leafy garden on the main square, the Old Cross offers old-fashioned

service, plush (if unmemorable) rooms and afternoon tea in the garden.

Eating & Drinking

Pebbles Yard Espresso Bar (% 720122; The Pebbles; snacks £3-5; 11am-5.30pm Jul & Aug, 10am-5.30pm Sep-Jun) A cute little space, with butter-yellow walls, worn pine floors and basketwork chairs, this café is the place to read the papers over a cappuccino, or tuck into cakes and Devonshire teas. Art on the walls, and cool tunes on the sound system.

Refectory at St David's (% 721760; St David's Cathedral; mains £4-8; 11am-9pm Jul & Aug, 10am-6pm Apr-Jun, Sep & Oct, 11am-4pm Nov-Mar) Part of the ongoing restoration of the cathedral cloister, this stylish modern café has a lunch menu with a choice of sandwiches and hot dishes (at least two vegetarian dishes), as well as excellent coffee and home baking. Grab a table upstairs with a view of the cloister and garden.

Cartref Restaurant (% 720422; 22-23 Cross Sq; mains £10-13) A big barn of a place on the main square, the Cartref is a good family-friendly choice, with highchairs and kids menus, and plenty of choice for vegetarians. The food is hearty, mainstream stuff such as lasagne, burgers and steak pies.

Morgan's Brasserie (% 720508; 20 Nun St; mains £13-19; 11am-2pm Fri-Sun, 6.30-10.30pm Thu-Mon) An elegant and intimate spot, with clean modern lines and an air of big-city sophistication, Morgan's turns out quality cuisine with a French touch, including local seafood specials and some gourmet vegetarian choices (how about leek and parsnip steamed pudding with herb and truffle gravy?).

Cwtch (% 720491; 22 High St; 2-/3-course dinner £20/25; 11am-2.30pm & 6-9.45pm Tue-Sat, noon-3pm Sun) Cwtch (pronounced 'cootch'; Welsh for 'cosy') lives up to its name, creating a snug atmosphere with the use of wood, warm colours and low lighting. The menu is big on local produce, from crab and asparagus to lamb, beef and sea bass. The signature fish pie is recommended.

Farmer's Arms (14 Goat St) One of the most popular pubs in the town, the Farmer's has real ale and Guinness on tap, and a good beer garden out back. It's a pleasant place to watch the sun go down on a summer's evening.

Shopping

Chapel Chocolates (The Pebbles) Chocoholics beware – the shelves in this shop are stacked floor to ceiling with more than 100 varieties

of handmade Welsh chocolates, truffles and other confectionery.

Pebbles Yard Gallery (Cross Sq) This dinky little gallery sells works by local artists, as well as funky contemporary jewellery, handicrafts and creative toys for kids.

St David's Food & Wine (High St) Stock up on picnic supplies at this delicatessen, which specialises in local organic produce.

Getting There & Away

Richards Brothers bus 411 runs to St David's from Haverfordwest (£3.50, 45 minutes, hourly Monday to Saturday, every two hours Sunday) and to Fishguard (50 minutes, every two hours Monday to Saturday, one daily Sunday).

From Easter to September, the Puffin Shuttle (bus 400/315) goes around the coast three times each day, from St David's to Solva (15 minutes), Newgale Beach (30 minutes), Broad Haven (£2.20, 50 minutes), Dale (1¾ hours) and Milford Haven (2¼ hours) to Haverfordwest (2½ hours) and back again.

The Celtic Coaster (bus 403) shuttles from St David's to St Non's Bay, Porthclais, St Justinian and Whitesands Beach (hourly Easter to September); a return ticket costs £1, an all-day ticket is £2.

AROUND ST DAVID'S Lower Solva

☎ 0147 / pop 1420

Lower Solva sits at the head of a picturesque, yacht-filled inlet, its single street lined with brightly painted, flower-laden cottages housing pretty B&Bs, art galleries, pubs and tearooms.

If sailing takes your fancy, you can enjoy a three-hour/full-day cruise aboard a 24ft yacht for £65/110 (up to three passengers) with **Solva Sailboats** (☎ 720972; 1 Maes-y-Forwen). It also rents sailing dinghies (£20 for two hours) and runs official Royal Yachting Association sailing courses.

The Puffin Shuttle bus (see above) calls here in summer; bus 411 between Haverfordwest and St David's also stops at Solva (hourly Monday to Saturday).

SLEEPING & EATING

Caleb's Cottage (☎ 721737; 7 Main St; s/d £35/50; 7 Easter-Sep) Bold colours, local artworks and a warm, country-cottage atmosphere are the main attractions at this former fisherman's dwelling; the coast path is a mere 100m away.

Old Printing House (☎ 721603; 20 Main St; 7 9am-6pm Mar-Oct, 11am-5pm Dec & Feb) For homemade cakes and sumptuous Devonshire teas, head to this snug, bare-stone-and-timber-beams tearoom; it also has a gift shop, and has a couple of B&B rooms to let upstairs (£25 per person).

Old Pharmacy (☎ 720005; 5 Main St; mains £8-20; 7 5.30-10pm) This is the village's gastronomic highlight, with a cosy cottage atmosphere, outdoor tables in a riverside garden, and a menu of Solva lobster and crab, local organic beef and lamb, and decadent homemade desserts.

St Non's Bay

This scenic bay, three-quarters of a mile south of St David's, is the supposed birthplace of Wales' patron saint, and is named after his mother. A path from the parking area leads down to the 13th-century ruins of **St Non's Chapel**, passing a sacred spring that is said to have emerged at the moment of St David's birth. The shrine still attracts pilgrims, and the water is believed to have curative powers. Nearby is a modern chapel beside a cliff-top Christian retreat centre.

Ramsey Island

Ramsey Island lies off St David's Head, ringed by dramatic sea cliffs and surrounded by an offshore armada of rocky islets and reefs known as the Bishops and Clerks. The island is an RSPB reserve famous for its large breeding population of choughs – glossy black birds with distinctive red bills and legs, members of the crow family – and for its grey seals. If you're here between late August and mid-November, you will also see seal pups.

You can reach the island by boat from the tiny harbour at St Justinian, 2 miles west of St David's. Longer boat trips run up to 20 miles offshore, to the edge of the Celtic Deep, to spot whales, porpoises and dolphins. What you'll see depends on the weather and the time of year; calm, clear conditions are best for sightings, and July to the September are the best months. Porpoises are seen on most trips, dolphins on four out of five, and there's a 40% chance of seeing whales. The most common whale species is the minke, but pilot whales, fin whales and killer whales have also been spotted.

Thousand Islands Expeditions (☎ 721721; www.thousandislands.co.uk; Cross Sq, St David's) is the only operator permitted by the RSPB to land day-trippers on Ramsey island (adult/child £14/7, including landing fee); there are two trips daily from April to October, each allowing

ST DAVID'S HEAD WALK

Begin at the Whitesands Bay car park (£2.50 per car in summer) and head north along the coastal path. After passing the secluded little beach at **Porthmelgan**, the path curves left and leads out to **St David's Head**. This promontory was fortified in prehistoric times, and you pass through the jumbled stones of an Iron Age rampart to find three oval rings of large rocks, the foundations of ancient huts. The tip of the headland is a series of rock and turf ledges, a great place for a picnic or a bit of wildlife-spotting – in summer you can see gannets diving into the sea offshore, and choughs soaring on the breeze above the cliffs.

Return to the gap in the rampart, and follow the obvious broad, grassy path through the heather, aiming at the middle of a long, low rocky outcrop on the skyline. As you get closer, it resolves into two outcrops: go past the smaller one (on your right), and behind it, to the right, you will find a Neolithic burial chamber known as **Coetan Arthur** (Arthur's Quoit).

Continue along the coastal path, climbing gently until you reach a cairn (marked 76m on OS map), then descend to where the path forks. The main coastal path strikes left along the cliff tops, but bear right on a broad path through heather and bracken that descends into a shallow valley (there may be wild ponies grazing here). Cross the tiny stream and climb uphill on the dogleg path on the far side until it levels out on the shoulder of **Carn Hen**, then head steeply up to the left towards the summit of the hill, which is capped with the remains of a WWII radar station. The summit of **Carn Llidi** (181m) lies a few hundred metres further east. Here you can enjoy a panoramic view that takes in Whitesands Bay, Ramsey and Skomer Islands, the rocks and reefs of the Bishops and Clerks and, on a clear day, the coast of Ireland on the horizon. The tall light-house way out to sea is the Smalls.

Go down the old road from the radar station and follow it as it curves left and descends through Porthmawr Farm. At the main road, turn right to return to Whitesands car park. Total distance is 3.5 miles; allow two hours.

three hours on the island. It also runs two-hour trips around Ramsey and other islands by high-speed inflatable boat (£30/15), three-hour whale- and dolphin-spotting cruises around Grassholm Island (£50/25), and exciting one-hour jet-boat trips (£18/10).

Voyages of Discovery (☎ 720285, 0800 854367; www.ramseyisland.co.uk; 1 High St, St David's) and **Aquaphobia** (☎ 720471; www.aquaphobia-ramseyisland.co.uk; Grove Hotel, High St, St David's) offer similar trips.

Whitesands Bay

The mile-long strand of Whitesands Bay (Porth Mawr) is one of southwest Wales' best beaches, and a popular surfing spot. At extremely low tide you can see the wreck of a paddle tugboat that went aground here in 1882, and the fossil remains of a prehistoric forest.

If Whitesands is really busy – and it often is – you can escape the worst of the crowds by walking north along the coastal path for 10 to 15 minutes to the smaller, more secluded beach at **Porthmelgan**.

Whitesands Surf School (☎ 07789 435670; www.whitesandsurfschool.co.uk) runs surfing lessons on the beach; a 2½-hour beginner's session costs £25, including equipment. You can book lessons

at **Ma Sime's Surf Hut** (☎ 720433; 28 High St) in St David's.

NORTH PEMBROKESHIRE

ST DAVID'S TO FISHGUARD

The coastline from St David's to Fishguard (and beyond) is less frequented than south and west Pembrokeshire, its coves and beaches mostly inaccessible by car. If you're only going to walk part of the Pembrokeshire Coast Path, this is an excellent section to tackle.

Porthgavlin

☎ 01348

For centuries the tiny harbour of Porthgavlin consisted of little more than a few sturdy cottages wedged into a rocky cove. In the mid-19th century it began to prosper as the port for shipping out slate quarried just down the coast at Aberiddy, and by the 1870s its own deposits of granite and fine clay had put it on the map as a source of building stone. The post-WWI slump burst the bubble, and the sturdy stone quays and overgrown brick storage 'bins' are all that remain.

Despite having been an industrial harbour, Porthgain is surprisingly picturesque and today it is home to a couple of art galleries and restaurants.

Porthgain is 8 miles northeast of St David's. The 411 St David's–Fishguard bus stops at Llanrhian, a mile inland (every two hours Monday to Saturday).

SLEEPING & EATING

Trefin Youth Hostel (YHA; % 0870 770 6074; Fford-y-Afon; dm £11; h Easter-Oct) This YHA hostel, set in a smartly refurbished former school building in the centre of the village, is two miles east of Trefin, half a mile inland from the Coast Path.

Caerhafod Lodge (% 837859; www.caerhafod.co.uk; Llanrhian; dm £13) About three-quarters of a mile southeast of Porthgain, Caerhafod is an excellent independent hostel in an old farm courtyard, with great views along the coast. Bike hire is available and dogs are welcome.

Sloop Inn (% 831449; Porthgain; mains £6-8; h 9.30am-11pm, lunch noon-2.30pm, dinner 6-9.30pm) With wooden tables worn smooth by many a bended elbow, old photos of Porthgain in its industrial heyday, and interesting nautical clutter all over the place, the Sloop is a cosy and deservedly popular pub. It dishes up breakfast (to 11am) to hungry walkers, and serves excellent meals, including *moules marinières*, locally caught crab, Welsh beef-steaks and homemade lasagne.

Shed Wine Bar & Bistro (% 831518; Porthgain; mains lunch £10-17, dinner £20-23; h noon-3pm & 6-11.30pm, tearoom 10am-4.30pm) Housed in a beautifully converted machine shop right by the little harbour, the Shed has grown into one of Pembrokeshire's finest seafood restaurants; the menu lists Porthgain crab and locally caught sea bass, gurnard, mullet and squid.

Strumble Head

At wild and rocky **Strumble Head**, the nearest point to Ireland, a lighthouse beams out its signal of four flashes every 15 seconds as the huge, high-speed catamaran ferries thunder past on their way from Fishguard to Rosslare. The headland makes a good vantage point for spotting whales and dolphins; below the parking area is a WWII lookout that now serves as a shelter for observing wildlife.

Two miles south of the headland is the scenic, cliff-bound cove of **Pwll Deri**, a good place for seal-watching, with the rocky sum-

mit of **Garn Fawr**, topped by an Iron Age fort, rising above it.

Little Pwll Deri Youth Hostel (YHA; % 0870 770 6004; Castell Mawr, Trefasser; dm £11; h Easter-Oct) enjoys a stunning location perched atop a 120m-high cliff overlooking the sea, perfectly placed for sunset with an immense panorama of coastal cliffs as far as St David's.

FISHGUARD (ABERGWAUN)

% 01348 / pop 3200

Fishguard, perched on a headland between its modern ferry port and former fishing harbour, is often overlooked by travellers, most of them passing through on their way to or from Ireland. But it's an appealing little town, with plenty of interest in the surrounding coast and countryside.

The Lower Town, next to the old fishing harbour, was used as a setting for the 1971 film version of *Under Milk Wood* with Richard Burton, Peter O'Toole and Elizabeth Taylor. It also featured (for all of two minutes) in the classic *Moby Dick* starring Gregory Peck.

This area was also the improbable setting for the last foreign invasion of Britain (see the boxed text the Last Invasion of Britain, p193).

Orientation

Fishguard is split into three distinct areas. The main town sits on top of a raised headland west of the river mouth, and is centred on Market Sq, where the buses stop; to the east is the picturesque harbour of the Lower Town. The train station and ferry terminal lie a mile to the northwest of the town centre in Goodwick (Wdig; pronounced oo-dick).

Information

Fishguard Library (% 872694; High St; h 9.30am-1pm Mon-Sat, 2-5pm Mon, Tue & Fri, 2-6.30pm Thu) Free internet access.

Health Centre (% 873041; Ropewalk)

Police Station (% 872835; Brodlog Lane)

Post Office (West St)

Seaways Bookshop (12 West St) Selection of local books and maps, and an entertaining series of booklets on Pembrokeshire walks and history.

Tourist Office (% 873484; Town Hall, Market Sq;

h 10am-5.30pm Jun-Sep, 10am-5pm Mon-Sat Easter-May & Oct, 10am-4pm Mon-Sat Nov-Easter)

Tourist Office (% 874737; Ocean Lab, Goodwick;

h 10am-6pm Easter-Oct, 10am-4pm Nov-Easter; per hr £2) Internet access.

Sights

The **Royal Oak Inn** on Market Sq was the scene of the French surrender in 1797 (see the boxed text, the Last Invasion of Britain, p193), and the place has turned into something of an invasion museum, filled with memorabilia. In the parish churchyard behind the pub can be found the grave of local heroine Jemima Nicholas.

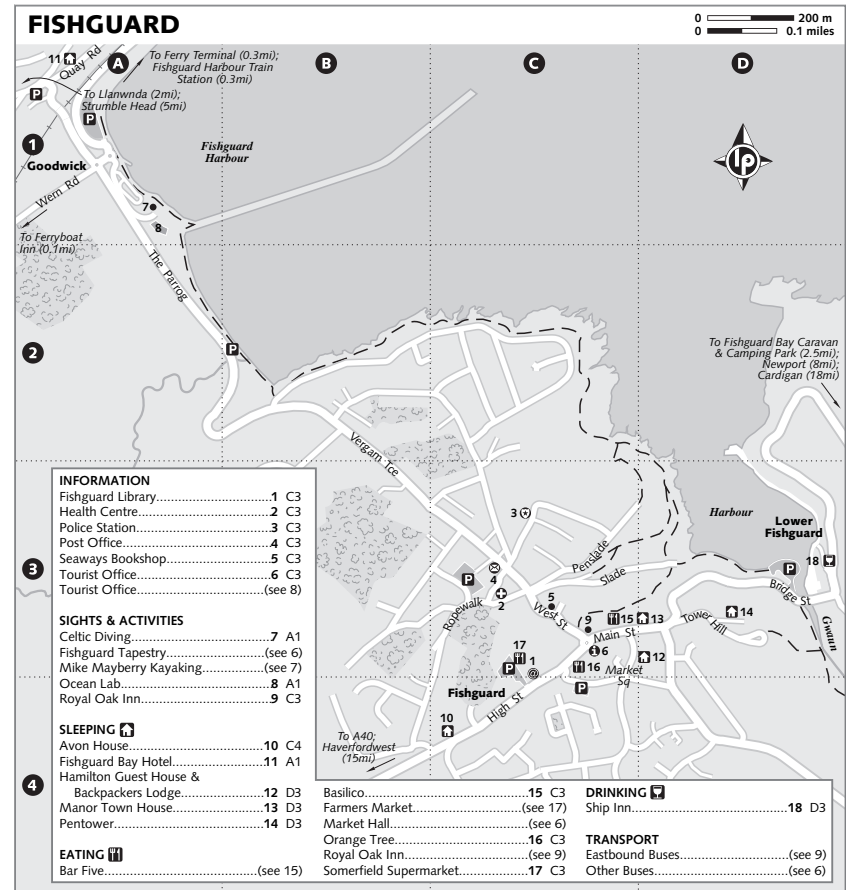
The **Ocean Lab** (% 874737; admission free; h 10am-6pm Jul & Aug, 10am-5pm Easter-Jun, Sep & Oct; 10am-4pm Nov-Easter), on the waterfront near Goodwick, houses an exhibition on marine life and the environment. Aimed mainly at kids, it has various hands-on exhibits, as well as Oscar the mammoth skeleton, a soft play area and a café.

Activities

The **Marine Walk**, which follows the coast from the car park on the Parrog around to the Lower Town, offers great views over the old harbour and along the coast to Dinas Head.

The **Last Invasion Trail** is a circular, 14-mile cycle route that visits all the sites associated with the hapless invasion; a leaflet showing the route is available from the tourist offices. It's a rough and hilly outing, taking in the memorial at Carregwastad Point, Strumble Head, Garn Fawr and Tregwynt.

Celtic Diving (% 871938; www.celticdiving.co.uk; The Parrog, Goodwick) runs half-day scuba-diving taster sessions in its own practice pool (£65), and also offers PADI-certified diving courses.



Mike Mayberry Kayaking (☎ 874699; www.mikemayberrykayaking.co.uk) offers one-hour 'try it out' kayaking sessions (£10) for beginners, as well as instruction courses and guided kayaking tours for more experienced paddlers.

Festivals & Events

The **International Music Festival** (☎ 873612) takes place in the last week of July, with various classical concerts and choirs whooping it up in town.

There's music of another kind during the **Fishguard Folk Festival** (www.pembrokeshire-folk-music.co.uk), which is held over the Spring Bank Holiday weekend at the end of May.

Sleeping

Fishguard Bay Caravan & Camping Park (☎ 811415; www.fishguardbay.com; Garn Gelli; sites per tent, car & 2 people £11-17; ⌂ Mar-Dec) This site is on the coastal path 2.5 miles east of town, perched on a headland overlooking the sea.

Hamilton Guest House & Backpackers Lodge (☎ 874797; www.hamiltonbackpackers.co.uk; 21 Hamilton St; dm/d/tr £14/36/48; ⌂) The Hamilton is a homey and relaxed hostel with small, six-bed dorms, a kitchen, TV lounge, laundry and sauna. The owner knows Pembrokeshire well, and is happy to point you towards the best walks, pubs and eateries in the area.

Avon House (☎ 874476; www.avon-house.co.uk; 76 High St; s/d/tr £20/45/55) A decent budget B&B, Avon House has bright, smartly decorated rooms, albeit lacking in atmosphere. The family triple is en suite, and has a double and a single bed.

Manor Town House (☎ 873260; www.manortownhouse.com; Main St; r per person £33-40) This lovely old Georgian house is warm with the glow of polished mahogany and the scent of fresh flowers, and has a lovely garden terrace where you can sit in the evenings. Ask for one of the big rooms at the back with gorgeous views across the old harbour.

Pentower (☎ 874462; www.pentower.co.uk; Tower Hill; s/d £40/60) Another place that boasts fantastic sea views, Pentower was built on top of Tower Hill by Sir Evan Jones, the architect who designed the harbour. The house is filled with antique furniture and historic detail, and the bedrooms are large and luxurious – choose the turret room, where you can watch the boats come and go from the comfort of an armchair.

Ferryboat Inn (☎ 874747; www.ferryboatinn.co.uk; Manor Way, Goodwick; s/d £45/65; ⌂) Although a touch bland looking on the outside, the Ferryboat has

sleek, modern and stylish bedrooms with trendy taupe and chocolate-brown décor, and is only 500m from ferry and train station.

Fishguard Bay Hotel (☎ 873571; www.bayhotelfishguard.co.uk; Quay Rd, Goodwick; s/d from £54/75; ⌂) A vast and rambling mansion of a place, this old-fashioned hotel has excellent views over the bay, and is where the film crew stayed during the shoot for *Under Milk Wood* in 1971. There's a large family room (£99) with a double and two bunk beds, and a deluxe double with four-poster beds and sea views (£95).

Eating & Drinking

Orange Tree (11 High St; snacks £2-3; ⌂ 8am-5.30pm Mon-Sat) A delicatessen and takeaway sandwich place, the Orange Tree sells tasty baguettes and has a sit-in coffee shop (open from 10am).

Royal Oak Inn (☎ 872514; Market Sq; mains £6-13) Not only does this pub have an important place in Fishguard's history, but it also serves the best pub food in town and hosts a popular live folk night on Tuesday where musicians are welcome to join in.

Bar Five (☎ 875050; 5 Main St; mains £7-12) This Georgian town house has been converted into a den of designer furniture and contemporary touches, with outdoor dining on a terrace overlooking the harbour, and a bistro menu focused on fresh local produce, simply prepared.

Basilico (☎ 871845; 3 Main St; mains £10-13) A stylish and intimate little place with candlelight glinting off polished wood floors, Basilico serves fresh Italian cuisine, ranging from standard pasta dishes to gourmet seafood.

Ship Inn (Newport Rd) This is a lovely little pub with an open fire in winter and lots of memorabilia on the walls, including photos of Richard Burton filming *Under Milk Wood* outside (the street and nearby quay have not changed a bit).

To stock up on groceries, head for the **Somerfield supermarket** (High St). A general produce market is held every Thursday in the **Market Hall** (Market Sq), and there's a Farmers Market in the Somerfield car park every second Saturday in summer (in the Market Hall in winter).

Getting There & Away

Richards Brothers' bus 411 runs to Fishguard from St David's (£3, 50 minutes, every two hours Monday to Saturday, two or three Sunday); the 412 runs to Haverfordwest (40 minutes, hourly Monday to Saturday, two on Sunday) and Cardigan (£3, 40 minutes).

From Monday to Saturday there's one direct train a day from Cardiff to Fishguard Harbour (£16, 2¼ hours) via Llanelli; on Sunday there's a slower train (2½ hours) that also calls in at Swansea and Carmarthen. Fishguard Harbour station is just a platform with no facilities; buy tickets on board the train.

For details of ferries to Ireland, see Transport, p324.

Getting Around

Bus 410 (half-hourly Monday to Saturday) runs a regular circuit from Market Sq to Goodwick and Fishguard Harbour.

AROUND FISGUARD

Two miles northwest of Goodwick lies the tiny medieval church of **Llanwnda** (☎ 24hr), which has several pre-Norman carved stones, inscribed with crosses and Celtic designs, set into the walls. Inside, look up at the timber roof beams; at the far end of the third beam from the west (door) end, facing the altar, is a 15th-century carving of a tonsured monk's head.

Across the lane from the church, a wooden gate with a yellow waymark indicates the start of the footpath to **Carregwastad Point**, the site of the infamous 1797 invasion (see the Last Invasion of Britain, below), three-quarters of a mile away.

Running inland to the southeast of Fishguard is **Cwm Gwaun** (pronounced coom gwine), the valley of the River Gwaun. This narrow, wooded cleft, best explored on foot or

bicycle, feels strangely remote and mysterious. Famously, the inhabitants retain a soft spot for the Julian calendar (abandoned by the rest of Britain in 1752), which means that they celebrate New Year on 13 January.

Stop for a pint at the **Dyffryn Arms** (☎ 01348-881305; Pontfaen), better known as Bessie's, a rare old-fashioned pub where the landlady pours your beer from a jug filled straight from the barrel; no hand pumps here!

From May to September, the Preseli Green Dragon bus from Newport stops at the Dyffryn Arms (20 minutes, two daily Tuesday and Saturday).

NEWPORT (TREFDRAETH)

☎ 01239 / pop 1120

In stark contrast to the industrial city of Newport in Gwent, the Pembrokeshire Newport is a pretty cluster of flower-bedecked cottages huddled beneath a small Norman castle. It sits at the foot of Carn Ingli, a massive bump on the seaward side of the Preseli Hills, and in recent years has gained a reputation for the quality of its restaurants and guesthouses; Newport has been touted as Wales' answer to Padstow (a Cornish fishing village turned trendy gastronomic resort).

Newport makes a pleasant base for walks along the coastal path or south into the Preseli Hills, but it does get crowded in summer. At the northwest corner of the town is little Parrog Beach, dwarfed by Newport Sands (Traeth Mawr) across the river.

THE LAST INVASION OF BRITAIN

While Hastings in 1066 may get all the press, the last invasion of Britain was actually at Carregwastad Point, northwest of Fishguard, on 22 February 1797. The ragtag collection of 1400 French mercenaries and bailed convicts, led by an Irish-American named Colonel Tate, had intended to land at Bristol and march to Liverpool, keeping English troops occupied while France mounted an invasion of Ireland. But bad weather blew them ashore at Carregwastad, where after scrambling up a steep cliff, they set about looting the Pencaer peninsula for food and drink.

The invaders had hoped that the English peasants would rise up to join them in revolutionary fervour but, not surprisingly, their drunken pillaging didn't endear them to the locals, and the French were quickly seen off by volunteer 'yeoman' soldiers, the helpers included the people of Fishguard, including most famously, one Jemima Nicholas, who single-handedly captured 12 mercenaries armed with nothing more than a pitchfork.

The beleaguered Tate decided to surrender at a meeting in a house in Fishguard, now the Royal Oak Inn. A mere two days after their arrival, the invaders laid down their weapons at Goodwick and were sent off to the jail at Haverfordwest.

In 1997 Fishguard commemorated the bicentenary of the invasion with the creation by 76 local volunteers of a 30m tapestry. The **Fishguard Tapestry** (inspired by the Bayeux Tapestry, which recorded the Norman invasion at Hastings in 1066) is displayed in the Town Hall on Market Sq.

There's a **National Park Visitor Centre** (☎ 820912; 2 Bank Cottages, Long St; 10am-6pm Mon-Sat Easter-Oct) opposite the main car park, a block north of the main street.

Sights

The striking **Newport Castle** (now a private residence) was founded by a Norman nobleman called William FitzMartin – who was married to a daughter of Lord Rhys ap Gruffydd – after his father-in-law drove him out of nearby Nevern in 1191. Newport grew up around the castle, initially as a garrison town.

The **West Wales Eco Centre** (☎ 820235; www.eco-centre.org.uk; Lower St Mary's St; admission free; 9.30am-4.30pm Mon-Fri) is an environmental education and resource centre; the energy-efficient stone building has a photovoltaic array on the roof that generates up to 40% of the centre's electricity needs.

There's a little dolmen (Neolithic burial chamber) called **Carreg Coetan** right in town; it's northeast of the centre, about 200m along Pen-y-Bont on the left.

Activities

WALKING

If you keep walking past Carreg Coetan you come to an iron bridge over the **Nevern Estuary**, a haven for birdlife especially in winter. Cross the bridge and turn left for an easy walk along the shoreline to the sandy beach of **Newport Sands**.

There are lots of fine possibilities for longer walks around **Carn Ingli** (347m). You can climb to the summit from town – take Market St then Church St uphill, past the castle on your right. At a fork in the lane called College Sq, go right (uphill), following narrow tracks past a couple of farms and houses to reach a gate leading onto the open hillside. Work your way up on grassy paths to the summit, the site of an Iron Age hill fort, with great views of Newport Bay and Dinas Head (3.5 miles round trip).

CYCLING

The back roads south of Newport, around Carn Ingli and Cwm Gwaun, offer some of the loveliest on-road cycling in southwest Wales. You can rent a bike from **Newport Bike Hire** (☎ 820773; East St), based in the Whole Food Shop on the main street, with rates from £10/15 per half-/full day.

Sleeping

Morawelon Caravan & Camping Park (☎ 820565; Parrog Beach; sites per car, tent & 2 people £6.50-8.50) This pleasant grassy site overlooks the beach north-west of the town, with views across the river mouth to Newport Sands.

Trefdraeth Youth Hostel (YHA; ☎ 0870 770 6072; Lower St Mary's St; dm £12.50; 1 Easter-Oct) Housed in a converted Victorian school next to the Eco Centre, this hostel is handy for the Coast Path, the beach and the town centre. It's closed during the day from 10am to 5pm.

Golden Lion Hotel (☎ 820321; www.goldenlionpemb.co.uk; East St; s/d £40/60) Bright, sunny décor, golden pine furniture and colourful flower arrangements make for a warm atmosphere in this appealing country inn. There's also a snug traditional bar with log fire, serving real ales, and a good restaurant (mains £8 to £14).

Soar Hill (☎ 820506; www.soarhill.com; Cilgwyn Rd; s/d £40/70; 10) Half a mile southeast of town (head up Bentick St, which becomes Cilgwyn Rd), Soar Hill is a 200-year-old house with a stunning hillside setting looking out over the Nevern Valley. The décor blends traditional and modern, with wood panelling and cast-iron fireplaces cheek-by-jowl with highback chairs and designer lampshades.

Llys Meddyg Guest House (☎ 820008; www.llysmeddyg.com; East St; d £90; 1) Housed in a lovely Georgian coaching inn, the 'Doctor's Court' has been beautifully restored and furnished with antiques. Bedrooms are large and bright, the lounge boasts leather sofas and a period fireplace, and there's a huge, secluded garden at the back. It's also one of the best places in town to eat.

Eating & Drinking

Café Fleur (☎ 820131; Market St; mains £4-6; 10am-8pm) This popular café goes for the rustic country-pine-and-terracotta-tile look, and serves tasty lunch dishes such as galettes, crepes, panini, soups and salads, as well as excellent coffee and cakes.

Morawelon Café Bar (☎ 820565; The Parrog; mains £8-15; 10am-5pm Apr-Oct, 10am-5pm Wed-Sun Dec-Mar, closed Nov) Down by the town beach, the Morawelon serves beer and wine as well as caffè lattes and herbal tea, and has a tempting lunch menu of local seafood dishes that includes hot buttered lobster. It also does a traditional roast lunch on Sundays.

Llys Meddyg Restaurant (☎ 820008; East St; mains £14-19) From the slate floor and leather

armchairs in the bar to the modern art in the elegant dining room, this place oozes style. The food is superb, with the menu changing with the seasons and reflecting the best of local produce, from zesty Thai-style crab cakes with chilli and coriander to succulent marinated lamb.

Cnapan Country House (☎ 820575; East St; 2-/3-course dinner £22/28; 11 noon-2pm & 6.45-8.45pm, closed Sun lunch & Tue) The Cnapan has a more formal look than Llys Meddyg, with candlelight and crisp white linen tablecloths, but the service is friendly and relaxed. The menu is home-cooked comfort food from the chunky seafood chowder to the calorie-packed steamed marmalade pudding.

Getting There & Away

Richards Brothers' bus 412 runs from Fishguard to Newport (15 minutes, hourly Monday to Saturday, two on Sunday) and on to Cardigan (20 minutes).

From April to September, the Poppit Rocket bus 405 also runs from Newport to Fishguard and Cardigan (three daily), but takes the back roads via Moylgrove and Poppit Sands. The rest of the year it runs between Newport and Cardigan only (three daily Monday, Thursday and Saturday).

From May to September the **Preseli Green Dragon** (☎ 0845 602 7008; www.prta.co.uk) walkers' bus runs from Newport to Crymch via Cwm Gwaun and the back roads around the Preseli hills (two daily Tuesday and Saturday only). You need to book a seat at least an hour in advance; ask the tourist office for details.

AROUND NEWPORT Dinas Island

The great wedge-shaped profile of Dinas Island juts out from the coast between Fishguard and Newport. It's not really an island, but is attached to the mainland by a neck of land, framed on either side by picturesque coves – the sandy strand of **Pwllgwaelod** to the west, and the rocky inlet of **Cwm-yr-Eglwys** to the east, where you can see the ruin of 12th-century St Brynach's Church, destroyed by the great storm of 1859.

The circuit of the headland (3.5 miles) makes an excellent walk, with the chance of spotting seals and dolphins from the 142m-high cliffs at Dinas Head, the northernmost point; a path across the neck between Pwllgwaelod and Cwm-yr-Eglwys allows you to return to your starting point.

Stop for lunch or a pint at the **Old Sailors** (☎ 01348-811491) at Pwllgwaelod, a former

haunt of Dylan Thomas; it serves fresh lobster and crab, and has outdoor tables.

Ceibwr Bay

Most of the 15 miles of coast between Newport and Cardigan is accessible only on foot. The one spot where a car or bike can get close is at the scenic, seal-haunted inlet of **Ceibwr Bay**, near the tiny hamlet of Moylgrove, reached via a maze of very narrow roads. A grassy platform near the road end, carpeted with sea pinks in summer, makes a great picnic spot.

The coastal scenery here is spectacular, with contorted cliffs to the north and a couple of sea stacks to the south. A half-mile walk south along the coast path leads to the **Witches' Cauldron**, a vast cliff-ringed, sea-filled hole caused by a cavern collapse.

There are no facilities at Ceibwr Bay. A mile inland is **Swn-y-Nant B&B** (☎ 01239-881244; www.moylgrove.co.uk; Moylgrove; r per person from £26), a modern house with a log fire and Rayburn stove; evening meals can be provided if you book in advance.

Nevern (Nanhyfer)

With its overgrown castle and atmospheric church, this little village 2 miles east of Newport makes a good objective for an easy walk. You approach the **Church of St Brynach** along a supremely gloomy alley of yew trees, estimated to be six centuries old; second on the right as you enter is the so-called bleeding yew, named after the curious reddish-brown sap that oozes from it. The beautifully melancholy churchyard dates from around the 6th century, predating the church.

Among the gravestones is a tall **Celtic cross**, one of the finest in Wales, decorated with interlace patterns and dating from the 10th or 11th century. According to tradition, the first cuckoo that sings each year in Pembrokeshire does so from atop this cross on St Brynach's Day (7 April).

Inside the church, the **Maglocunus Stone**, thought to date from the 5th century, forms a windowsill in the south transept. It is one of the few carved stones that bears an inscription in both Latin and ogham, and was instrumental in deciphering the meaning of ogham, an ancient Celtic script.

Pentre Ifan

The largest and best-preserved dolmen in Wales, Pentre Ifan is a 4500-year-old Neolithic

MYSTERY OF THE BLUESTONES

The only upland area in the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park is the **Preseli Hills** (Mynydd Preseli), rising to 536m at Foel Cwmcerwyn, the highest point. These hills are at the centre of a fascinating prehistoric landscape, scattered with hill forts, standing stones and burial chambers, and are famous as the source of the mysterious bluestones of Stonehenge.

There are 31 bluestone monoliths (plus 12 'stumps') at the centre of Stonehenge, each weighing around four tonnes, and how they were transported from Preseli to Salisbury Plain – a distance of 240 miles – is one of the great mysteries of the ancient world.

Geochemical analysis shows that the Stonehenge bluestones originated from outcrops around Carnmenyn and Carn Goedog at the eastern end of Mynydd Preseli. Stonehenge scholars have long been of the opinion that Preseli and the bluestones held some religious significance for the builders of Stonehenge, and that they laboriously dragged these monoliths down to the River Cleddau, then carried them by barge from Milford Haven, along the Bristol Channel and up the River Avon, then overland again to Salisbury Plain.

In 2000 a group of volunteers tried to re-enact this journey, using primitive technology to transport a single, three-tonne bluestone from Preseli to Stonehenge. They failed – having already resorted to the use of a lorry, a crane and modern roads, the stone slipped from its raft and sank just a few miles into the sea journey.

However, research published in the *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* in 2006 lends new support to an alternative theory that the bluestones were actually transported by Ice Age glaciers, and dumped around 40 miles to the west of the Stonehenge site by the melting ice some 12,000 years ago, where they were discovered by the prehistoric henge builders.

Whatever the truth, the Preseli hills provide some excellent walking country. An ancient track called the **Golden Road**, once part of a 5000-year-old trade route between Wessex and Ireland, runs along the crest of Mynydd Preseli, passing prehistoric cairns and the stone circle of Bedd Arthur.

The Preseli Green Dragon bus (see p195) will drop you at Crymych at the eastern end of the hills, allowing you to hike along the Golden Road to the car park at Bwlch Gwynt on the B4329 (7.5 miles), where you can catch the afternoon bus back to Newport.

burial chamber set on a remote hillside with superb views across the Preseli Hills and out to sea. The huge, 5m-long capstone, weighing more than 16 tonnes, is delicately poised on three tall, pointed, upright stones, made of the same bluestone that was used for the menhirs at Stonehenge.

The site is about 4 miles southeast of Newport, on a minor road south of the A487; it's signposted.

Castell Henllys

Some 2000 years ago there was a thriving Celtic settlement at what's now called Castell Henllys (Castle of the Prince's Court). Students from the University of York archaeology department have been digging and sifting at the site every summer since 1981, and have learned enough

to build a remarkable re-creation of the settlement on its original foundations, complete with educated guesses about the clothing, tools, ceremonies and agricultural life of that time.

A visit to **Castell Henllys Iron Age Settlement** (☎ 01239-891319; www.castellhenllys.com; Felindre Farchog; adult/child £3/2; ⌚ 10am-5pm Apr-Oct) is like travelling back in time. There are reconstructions of the settlement's buildings – four thatched round-houses, animal pens, a smithy and a grain store. There are Iron Age breeds of livestock, craft demonstrations, Celtic festivals and other events that bring the settlement to life.

Castell Henllys is 4 miles east of Newport. Take the hourly Newport to Cardigan bus 412 and get off at the Melina Rd stop, from where it's a three-quarter-mile walk to Castell Henllys.

Pembrokeshire Coast Path

Duration	15 days
Distance	186 miles
Difficulty	moderate–demanding
Start	Amroth
Finish	St Dogmaels
Nearest Towns	Tenby (p165), Cardigan (p207)
Transport	train, bus

Summary Straddling the line where Wales drops suddenly into the sea, this is one of the most spectacular routes in Britain.

The rugged Pembrokeshire coast is what you would imagine the world would look like if God was a geology teacher. There are knobbly hills of volcanic rock, long thin inlets scoured by glacial meltwaters, and stratified limestone pushed up vertically and eroded into natural arches, blowholes and sea stacks. Stretches of towering red and grey cliff give way to perfect sandy beaches, only to resume around the headland painted black.

The Pembrokeshire Coast Path (PCP) was established in 1970, and takes you from popular holiday spots to long stretches where the only evidence of human existence are the ditches of numerous Celtic forts. In the south, Norman castles dominate many towns and villages, and once held the Celts at bay, creating a frontier that still exists today in the Landsker line (see p32).

The landscape allows for all kinds of outdoor pursuits, whether they are rock climbing, kayaking, surfing or stretching out on a towel with a trashy novel. Marine life is plentiful, and rare birds make the most of the remote cliffs, with peregrine falcons, red kites, buzzards, choughs, puffins and gannets to be spotted.

It's not all nature and beauty, however. Several military installations require long detours along roads, and two whole days are dominated by the heavy industry of Milford Haven. Still, other manmade structures redeem our impact somewhat – beautiful St David's with its delicate cathedral, haughty Pembroke Castle and the pastel-shaded cottages of Tenby.

PLANNING

We've suggested a south-to-north route, allowing an easy start in highly populated areas to build up to longer, more isolated stretches where you'll need to carry food with you. Some distances look deceptively short, but you must remember the endless steep ascents and descents where the trail crosses harbours and beaches. Referring to a tide table is essential if you want to avoid lengthy delays on a couple of sections.

The weather can be quite changeable, so bring wet-weather gear and something warm, even in the height of summer. During the school holidays it pays to book ahead, as B&Bs, hostels and camp sites fill up quickly. Between Whitesands and Fishguard, sleeping and eating options are especially limited.

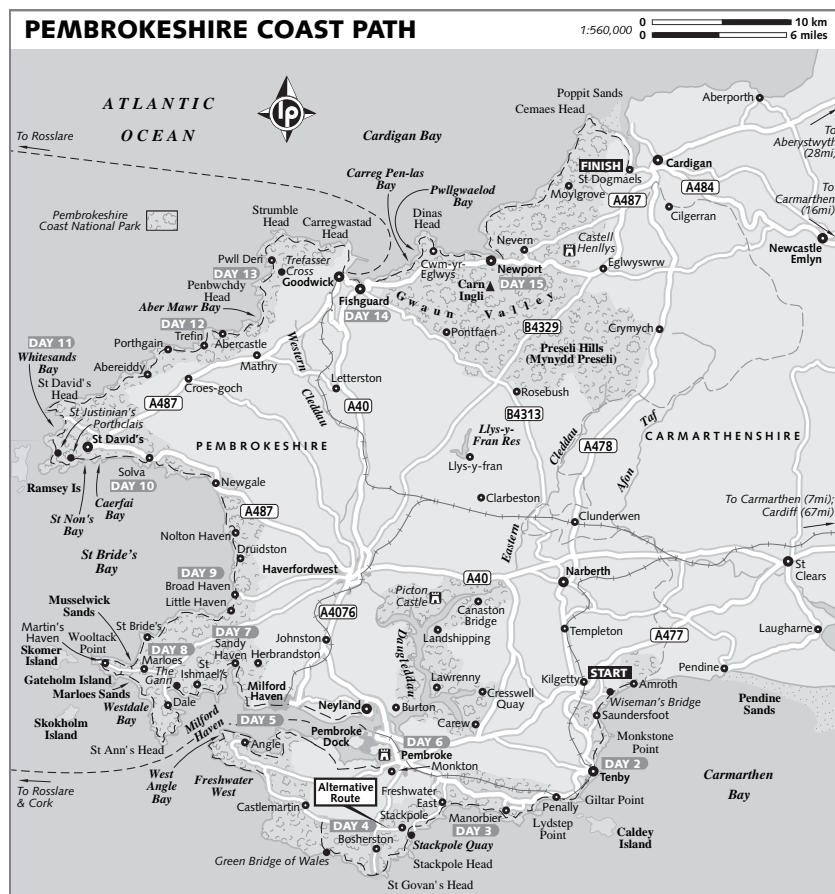
When to Walk

In spring and early summer, wildflowers transform the route with an explosion of colour, and migratory birds are likely to be seen. The height of summer will tend to be dryer and more conducive to enjoying the numerous beaches on the route. Other mid- to late-summer advantages include migrating whales, flocks of butterflies and plenty of wild blackberries to snack on – a good payoff for walking in the heat. As you head into autumn, seals come

ashore to give birth to their pups. Winter is generally more problematic, as many hostels and camp sites close from October until Easter, and buses are less frequent. Needless to say, walking around precipitous cliffs in the wind, rain and chill may not be the most enjoyable (or safest) experience.

Maps & Guides

The route is covered by Ordnance Survey (OS) Explorer 1:25,000 maps 35 (*North Pembrokeshire*) and 36 (*South Pembrokeshire*). The official national trail guide, *Pembrokeshire Coast Path* by Brian John, includes the coastal section of these same maps, but is cheaper and more manageable, with detailed route descriptions, albeit running north to south. More useful is *The Pembrokeshire Coastal Path*, by Dennis Kelsall, which describes the routes in the preferred south-to-north direction, and includes detailed route descriptions, background information, line maps and an accommodation list. A series of 10 single-sheet trail cards (50p each), available from tourist offices and National Park Centres, cover the route, with basic maps pointing out sites of interest along the way.



Day	From	To	Miles
1	Amroth	Tenby	7
2	Tenby	Manorbier	8.5
3	Manorbier	Bosherston	15
4	Bosherston	Angle	15
5	Angle	Pembroke	13.5
6	Pembroke	Sandy Haven	16
7	Sandy Haven	Marloes	14
8	Marloes	Broad Haven	13
9	Broad Haven	Solva	11
10	Solva	Whitesands	13
11	Whitesands	Trefin	12
12	Trefin	Pwll Deri	10
13	Pwll Deri	Fishguard	10
14	Fishguard	Newport	12.5
15	Newport	St Dogmaels	15.5

Information Sources

There are National Park Centres in St David's (p184), Newport (p193) and Tenby (p165), with maps, guidebooks and, most importantly the free *Coast to Coast* newspaper (online at www.visitpembrokeshirecoast.com). It contains bus timetables and tide tables, which are not just helpful – they're essential. The National Park website (www.pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk) is also incredibly useful, with accommodation listings and abundant advice for walkers.

THE WALK

Day 1: Amroth to Tenby

3–4 hours, 7 miles

Starting at a wide sandy beach, this short section is the perfect teaser for what's to come, allowing plenty of time for swimming and sightseeing.

A pair of bilingual brass plaques marks the beginning of the trail, near the eastern end of Amroth. Today's destination is clearly in sight, peering out behind rocky little Monkstone, which abuts the point at the south end of the bay. At low tide you can kick off your shoes and follow the shore all the way to Monkstone Point, although the official track takes the road and then follows the cliffs along what was once a railway track. Just over an hour away in Saundersfoot, there are places to eat and a tourist office (☎ 01834-813672) by the picturesque harbour.

The path continues through a wooded area, taking a short diversion down Monkstone Point before doubling back to come out into the fields near the large Trewayne Farm Caravan & Camping Park (☎ 01834-813402; www.camping-pembroke-shire.co.uk; Monkstone; sites per person £4). From here there are a few sharp inclines, with ever nearer views of candy-striped Tenby (p165) along the way.

Day 2: Tenby to Manorbier

3½–4½ hours, 8.5 miles

Another brilliant day with breathtaking cliff-top views. There are a number of steep climbs, but the distance is mercifully short.

Lose the shoes and enjoy the first mile along sandy South Beach. As you near the end you'll be able to spot whether the red flag is flying over Giltar Point. Don't get excited and break into the 'Internationale' – the revolution hasn't

WARNING

The Pembrokeshire Coast Path (PCP) is safe for sensible adult walkers, but parts of it are certainly not suitable for young children. At the time of writing, no-one has died on the path for 10 years, but fatal accidents have happened in the past. The path is quite narrow and often runs close to the top of sheer cliffs. Take great care, especially when you're tired, visibility is poor, the path is wet or there are high winds (when your backpack can turn into a sail).

Don't attempt to swim across river mouths and be aware that some beaches have strong undertows and rips. Particular care should be taken at Whitesands, Newgale, Freshwater West and Marloes Sands when the surf's up. Lifeguards patrol the areas between the flags every day during school holidays. Generally the beaches from Amroth to Tenby are the safest.

Don't pick up anything shiny in the military firing ranges, and definitely don't attempt to cross these zones when the red flags are flying, even if there's no guard to block your way.

Probably the most dangerous stretches are where the route follows roads with no footpath. A particularly treacherous area is near the grimly named Black Bridge on the way into Milford Haven. Take care also at Wiseman's Bridge, and between Little and Broad Havens. For these last two, you're safer crossing on the beach at low tide, but mind that you don't get cut off by the tide.

Don't attempt a short cut along any beach unless you're sure you can make it to the other side. If you get trapped, the best you can hope for is a sodden pack. At worst, you could be in real danger.

started. It just means that the military is using their firing range. Ordinarily the path takes you up around the clifftop, but when the flag is flying you're forced to make a diversion through the nearby village of Penally. This isn't all bad, as Penally has a pair of decent pubs and a church containing two Celtic crosses from the 10th and 11th centuries.

You'll eventually rejoin the cliff path to enjoy incredible views over Caldey Island (p167). Head down to caravan-covered Lydstep, about two hours from Tenby, before hooking up with the road at the other end of the beach, cutting across the point and regaining the cliffs as the path twists seriously close to sheer drops. Look out for the Church Doors limestone formation linking two beaches far below.

Soon you'll pass the futuristic grey-and-yellow Manorbier Youth Hostel (p169) – a cross between a space station and a motorway diner. It was once part of the military base that still occupies the neighbouring headland, where you're forced to make another detour away from the cliffs, returning high above the extraordinary red limestone ramparts of Presipe Beach.

It all builds to a spectacular finale, with the path heading alongside a number of sudden 20m-deep chasms. As you turn the corner and Manorbier comes into view, look out for King's Quoit, a Neolithic burial chamber fashioned from massive slabs of rock.

Day 3: Manorbier to Bosherton

5½–7 hours, 15 miles

A slightly longer day, continually alternating between sheer cliffs and sandy beaches. Lunch options are limited, so consider taking food with you.

From Manorbier it's an easy 3.5 miles to Freshwater East. While not the surfie haven of its western namesake, it's still a popular holiday destination. After another surging section of cliff you reach the tiny harbour of Stackpole Quay (p170), and then pass two massive arches, one big enough for large boats to pass through. From Stackpole Head you can look back proudly and survey your whole walk so far.

About 2 miles further on, you reach a bay called Broadhaven South (not to be confused with Broad Haven, your stopping point on Day 8), where the trail goes inland slightly and crosses a footbridge on the edge of the National

Trust's Stackpole Estate (p169). West of here is another military firing range and the trail divides; if there's no red flag you can take the path along the coast, past several natural rock arches, to St Govan's Head and visit the tiny 6th-century St Govan's Chapel (p170), set into the cliffs. From the chapel you follow a lane 1.5 miles north to reach the little village of Bosherton.

However, if the red flags are flying, you'll have to take a shortcut inland through the nature reserve (a very nice route in its own right), over foot-bridges and around long, thin lily ponds to reach Bosherton (p169).

Day 4: Bosherton to Angle

5½–7 hours, 15 miles

There are patches of wonderful coastal scenery, but prepare for some tedious road walking, courtesy of the British Army. For tips to avoid this, see p197.

Quite why the army needs to use some of the most beautiful parts of Britain's coast to test its killing power is anyone's guess. Much of the next stretch is a tank firing range, permanently off limits to the public. Other parts are open as long as firing isn't actually taking place. There's usually a schedule of the firing times posted in Ye Olde Worlde Café (p170) in Bosherton.

If you're lucky, you'll be able to head back down to St Govan's Chapel and continue the trail along the coast – a beautiful 3.5-mile stretch with numerous caves, blowholes and natural arches, including the much photographed Green Bridge of Wales. If you're unlucky and the red flags are flying, you'll have to take the road for an additional 3 miles west from Bosherton. But at Stack Rocks, red flags or not, you will have to turn inland and begin a 9-mile road walk. With ear-splitting detonations from the range, very little protection from passing vehicles and high hedgerows hiding much of the view, this is not an enjoyable diversion. The upside of this is that it does save you a few miles and gives you more incentive to wait for the bus.

You reach the coast again at spectacular Freshwater West (p170), beyond which the trail loops around the Angle Peninsula – another beautiful section with caves, tiny islands and little bays. At popular West Angle Bay you could easily cheat and follow the road for 10 minutes to the village of Angle (p171). Otherwise it's only an hour to Angle Point, where the path curves back into the village.

Day 5: Angle to Pembroke

5–6 hours, 13.5 miles

Today the scenery turns industrial and there's nowhere to get lunch.

As you enter the Milford Haven estuary, the castles and church steeples that have dominated this landscape since Norman times are now dwarfed by the massive towers and domes of modern oil refineries. When they're not spewing out black smoke there's something almost majestic about the scale of them – although the novelty may wear off after two full days of walking in their shadow.

The trail runs around Angle Bay and along the south bank of the estuary, alongside the vast Texaco refinery and past several tanker jetties. Your next highlight is the demolished power station, beyond which tracks, lanes and roads lead through medieval Monkton into Pembroke (p171).

Day 6: Pembroke to Sandy Haven

6–8 hours, 16 miles

The day starts urban and quickly becomes industrial. Make sure you check your tide tables before setting out, or you may find yourself taking a nasty detour. The path takes you across the Pembroke River and round the backstreets of Pembroke Dock (a separate town), then over the large Cleddau Bridge, which does at least provide some views. Stay on the road until you cross a second bridge, before following the river back down into Neyland. If you're

camping, nearby **Shipping Farm** (☎ 01646-600286; Rose Market; sites per person £4) comes highly recommended. There's a large new gas terminal and a very dangerous section of pavement-deprived road before you cross the Black Bridge into the grim suburbs of Milford Haven. Beyond the docks there's a final section of grey suburban streets and, just for luck, another bloody gas terminal (Exxon) then – hooray! – you're back to the national park and the beautiful coast again. From here it's a short hop to Sandy Haven.

The little estuary of Sandy Haven can be crossed (using stepping stones) during the 2½ hours either side of low tide (a tide table is posted by the slipway on each side). At high tide it's a 4-mile detour via Herbrandston and Rickeston Bridge. At Herbrandston the **Taberna Inn** (☎ 01646-693498; s/d with shared bathroom £25/50) offers B&B (shared bathrooms) and food in a popular local pub (mains £10, open lunch and dinner).

Before the crossing, relaxed **Sandy Haven Camping Park** (☎ 01646-695899; www.sandyhavencampingpark.co.uk; sites per tent & 2 persons £9-11) has good facilities. On the west side of the estuary, close to the trail, **Skerryback Farm** (☎ 01646-636598; www.pfh.co.uk/skerryback; s/d incl breakfast £30/55) offers beds with en suites for weary walkers. Further towards St Ishmael's, **Bicton Farm** (☎ 01646-636215; jdlllewellin@aol.com; s/tw with shared bathroom £20/46, d £50) is another good B&B option.

Day 7: Sandy Haven to Marloes

5–6½ hours, 14 miles

Today takes you back to nature, with more ragged cliffs and deserted sandy beaches, as the industrial plants dissolve into the distance.

From Sandy Haven there are 4 miles of fine clifftop walking to the Gann, another inlet that can only be crossed 3½ hours either side of low tide (otherwise it's a 2.5-mile detour via Mullock). The path leads into Dale, where you can grab a sandwich at the **Boathouse** (mains £2.50-5; ☎ breakfast & lunch) or a more substantial meal at the **Griffin Inn** (☎ 01646-636227; mains £4-12; ☎ lunch & dinner). A 10-minute walk through the village, past Dale castle, to Westdale Bay would save you 2½ hours, but cost you 5 miles of beautiful scenery around St Ann's Head (p183).

Two miles along the cliffs past Westdale Bay you'll see the remains of an abandoned WWII airfield. Above the impressive sweep of Marloes Sands, the sign to well-positioned Marloes Sands Youth Hostel (p183) is three-quarters of the way along the beach.

Day 8: Marloes to Broad Haven

4½–6 hours, 13 miles

A wonderful walk along dramatic clifftops, ending in an impressive beach.

Head back to Marloes Sands; at the end of the beach you pass Gateholm Island, a major Iron Age Celtic settlement where the remains of 130 hut circles have been found. You'll pass many such sites today – look out for the earthwork ramparts of promontory forts.

Martin's Haven, at the tip of the peninsula, is the base for **Skomer Island boat trips** (p183) and the office of the Skomer Marine Nature Reserve, with an interesting display on the underwater environment. Set into the wall next to the office is a Celtic cross, which may date to the 7th century.

Around the headland the cliffs change from red to black, and after an hour you'll reach Musselwick Sands. **St Bride's Haven** is a further 2 miles down the track, with the headland dominated by a Victorian faux castle, once owned by the barons of Kensington. A reasonably easy 5-mile stretch leads to Little Haven, separated by rocks from **Broad Haven** (p183). From the path you'll be able to assess the tide and decide whether to follow the busy road or cross via the beach.

Day 9: Broad Haven to Solva

4–5½ hours, 11 miles

Don't be fooled by the distance – today's no easy stroll. There are several steep climbs, but thankfully the scenery remains superb.

Ancient fortifications are even more evident today as you follow the cliffs up from the beach. After an hour you should reach the **Druidstone Hotel** (p184), a rambling old hotel and restaurant at the top of Druidstone Haven. Just down from the hotel, what looks like a Bronze Age barrow turns out to be an ultramodern home dug into the earth.

A further 30 minutes will bring you to Noltan Haven, a former coal port with a pub by the beach. From here the trail gets really steep, sweeping up and down the cliffs towards beautiful 2.5-mile-long **Newgale Beach** (p183). Frustratingly, you can't get down to the beach until you've walked half its length on the undulating cliff path. **Newgale Camping Site** (☎ 01437-710253; www.newgalecampingsite.co.uk; sites per person £5) has well-kept facilities, and is perfectly positioned by the beach and the **Duke of Edinburgh** (☎ 01437-720586; mains £4-7; ☎ lunch & dinner).

As you pass over the bridge by the pub, you're crossing the **Landsker Line** (p32). From Newgale the trail climbs back onto the cliffs. The 5-mile walk to **Lower Solva** (p188) is along a rugged section with impressive rock formations.

Day 10: Solva to Whitesands

5–7 hours, 13 miles

The spectacular coastline takes a spiritual turn as you follow in the footsteps of Wales' patron saint.

From Solva, the trail climbs back onto the cliffs and the superb coastal scenery continues. After two hours you'll reach **Caerfai Bay**, a sheltered sandy beach with two wonderful walker-friendly camp sites (p186) right on the path.

Around the next headland is **St Non's Bay** (p188). If you're cutting inland to St David's for lunch, it's a 20-minute walk from here along the marked path through the fields.

Back on the PCP, another half-hour brings you to the tiny harbour of Porthclais. Continuing round the headland there are good views across to **Ramsey Island** (p188). The treacherous reefs close to the island are evocatively known as the Bitches; from the shore you can see and hear the tide rushing through the largest of them, the **Great Bitch**. Another easy 2 miles will bring you to the busy surf beach of **Whitesands Bay** (p189).

Day 11: Whitesands to Trefin

4½–6 hours, 12 miles

Wild St David's Head offers a rugged new landscape at the beginning of a beautiful but taxing walk with several steep ascents.

From Whitesands the trail quickly takes you to **St David's Head**, an untamed outcrop scattered with boulders and the remnants of an Iron Age fort, which is painted with streaks of yellow and purple flowers in summer. For the next 2 miles the only sign of human habitation is an ancient dolmen (Neolithic burial chamber); herds of horses roam around, adding to the primitive feel.

After an undulating 3½-hour walk, the beachside settlement of **Abereddy** reveals ruins from the industrial age. Another half hour will bring you to **Porthgain** (p189), another former quarry town and now a quiet village with a quaint harbour. From here it's an easy hour to Trefin and a well-earned rest.

At Trefin you'll find **Prendergast Camping Park** (☎ 01348-831368; www.prendergastcaravanpark.co.uk; sites per person £3.50), so well sheltered behind its hedges it's difficult to spot. The facilities are excellent and well-maintained, but you'll need to put a coin in the slot to get a hot shower. Relaxed and friendly **Hampton House**

(% 01348-837701; viv.kay@virgin.net; 2 Ffordd-y-Felin; s/d £25/50) has three simple rooms, and **Bryngarw Guest House** (% 01348-831221; www.bryngarwguesthouse.co.uk; Abercastle Rd; s/d £40/60) has some impressive sea views. The only dinner option is the **Ship Inn** (% 01348-831445; mains £7-15; h lunch & dinner), serving typically uninspiring but hearty pub food.

Day 12: Trefin to Pwll Deri

3½–4½ hours, 10 miles

Today's walk is yet another wonderful experience, with cliffs, rock buttresses, pinnacles, islets, bays and beaches. It's tempered by a distinct paucity of eating and accommodation options.

From Trefin it's an easy 3 miles to Abercastle. Before you reach the small beach, take a short detour over the stiles to Carreg Sampson, a 5000-year-old burial chamber with a capstone over 5m long. After another 4 miles you'll reach sandy Aber Mawr Beach.

The headland of Penbwhchdy is the beginning of one of the most impressive stretches of cliff on the whole path. If the weather is good you can see all the way back to St David's Head; if it's windy you may be thankful for the circular dry-stone shepherds' shelter here. Either way, it's a wild 40-minute walk to join the road above the bay of Pwll Deri (p190), where there's another stunning view back along the cliffs.

Day 13: Pwll Deri to Fishguard

3½–4½ hours, 10 miles

There's excellent cliff scenery and reasonably easy walking on this deserted section, but come prepared or you may be very hungry by the time you reach Goodwick.

From Pwll Deri the trail leads along the cliffs for 3 miles to the impressive promontory of Strumble Head (p190), marked by its famous lighthouse. A mile inland you can pitch a tent at Tresinwen Farm (% 01348-891238; sites per person £2). About 3 miles further on you reach Carregwastad Point, where the last invasion of Britain occurred some 200 years ago (see p193). Shortly after this, the small wooded valley of Cwm Felin comes as a surprise in this otherwise windswept landscape.

An hour later you round the headland, and with a sudden jolt there's Goodwick and behind it Fishguard (p190), the largest town since Milford Haven. The trail drops down to the port of Goodwick to come out by the ferry quay, then heads past a roundabout at the bottom of the hill. Along the waterfront there are a series of interesting historical plaques and mosaics illustrating the history of the area.

From here the trail climbs steeply up to the cliffs, skirting Fishguard. Stay with it until you reach a viewpoint overlooking Lower Fishguard, then go up Penslade St, which will bring you out on West St, very near the town centre.

Day 14: Fishguard to Newport

5–6 hours; 12.5 miles

There are superb views from the cliffs on this section, but only one lunch option.

Leaving Fishguard you follow the trail round picturesque Lower Fishguard, the location for the 1971 film of Dylan Thomas' *Under Milk Wood*, and then head out along the clifftops once again.

About 4 miles on, at the small bay of Pwllgwaelod, the Old Sailors (p195) is a good lunch stop. It's possible to take a short cut to Cwm-yr-Eglwys through the valley that almost divides Dinas Head from the mainland, but

don't be tempted – it's a wonderful walk along the coast and you might spot seals and dolphins.

From Cwm-yr-Eglwys it's only 3 miles on to the Parrog, the old port of Newport. From here, continue to follow the PCP through a small wooded section; turn right at the fingerpost to the youth hostel and you'll hit the centre of Newport (p193).

Day 15: Newport to St Dogmaels

6–8 hours, 15.5 miles

We've saved the longest, steepest day till last – when those newly formed rocklike thighs and buns of steel can best handle it. Grab a packed lunch and head for the finish line, enjoying some of the best walking on the whole route.

East of Newport Sands, the coast along the first half of this section is wild and uninhabited, with numerous rock formations and caves. You may see Atlantic grey seals on the rocks nearby. Onwards from Ceibwr Bay (p195) is quite tough, but it's a wonderful roller-coasting finale, past sheer cliffs reaching a height of 175m – the highest of the trail.

At Cemaes Head, stop and take stock. The end of the trail is nigh but aesthetically this headland is the finish. So, turning your back on the cliffs, follow the lane towards St Dogmaels and Cardigan (p207).

A mile past the beach of Poppit Sands you leave the national park and a plaque on a wall seems like the end of the trail. Don't celebrate just yet. The actual end is a couple of miles further on, unmarked, near a carved wooden mermaid as you enter St Dogmaels village. Now you can pop the champagne!

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