

Pendine ¹



An award winning beach of two halves. Look west and you will find dramatic cliffs with a wealth of rock pools and wild cliff top paths linking onto the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park (this area was used, during World War II, for practising the 'D-Day' landings!). To the east, 7 miles of glorious sandy beach, home to the setting of historic land speed records. At the far end of this expanse, huge cockle beds are harvested all year round, reflecting the pure nature of the Carmarthen Bay waters. The huge expanse of sand is ideal for flying kites & collecting shells to remind you of your visit.



Laugharne ²



Providing inspiration to so many writers and immortalised by Dylan Thomas with the words "sloe black, slow, black, crow black fishingboat-bobbing sea..." On the edge of the River Taf estuary, Dylan Thomas' writing shed and boathouse is open to the public, as is the Castle and graveyard (where Dylan Thomas and his wife Caitlin are buried). Several fine eating and drinking places - including various pubs once frequented by Thomas. Walk miles of coast and countryside footpaths, the jewel in the crown being the Dylan Thomas Birthday Walk, a short stroll taking in one of the poet's favourite walks immortalised in his "Poem in October".



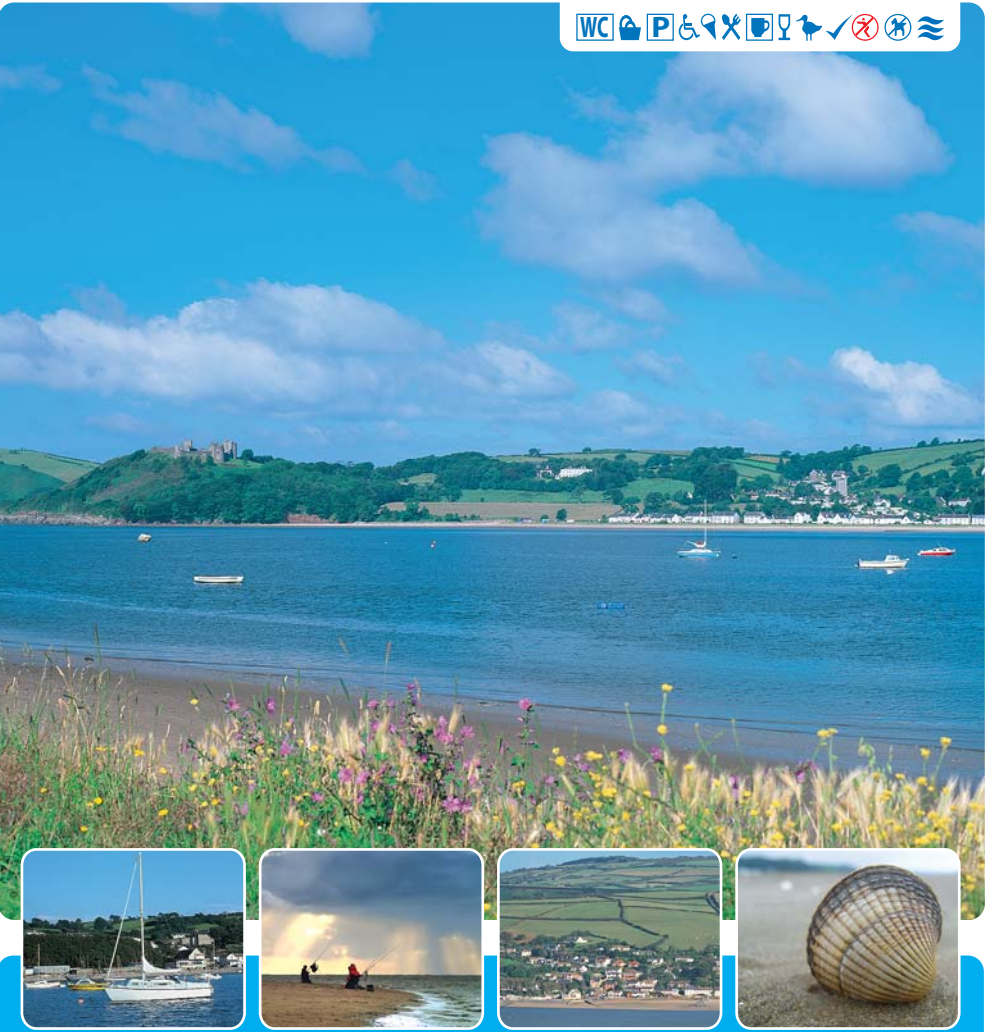
Llansteffan & Scotts Bay ³



Seven miles south of Carmarthen, this large peaceful beach with views across the River Towy to Ferryside, has lovely soft sand to sit on and firm sand for building sand castles. The beach is covered with cockle shells and the rock pools are alive as you venture towards Scott's Bay. Unique selling point: the lovely fish & chips to be had from a little "hut" by the beach. Overlooking the beach is another of Wales' famous castles, the 12th century Norman built stronghold (Llansteffan Castle) which is known for its monumental Great Gatehouse. The village was once a fashionable holiday destination for Victorian and Edwardian folk from the towns.



Ferryside ⁴



At the mouth of the River Tywi, Ferryside is tucked away off the beaten track but it does have its own railway station (London to Fishguard route) and is home to the River Towy Yacht Club. Ferryside rewards the visitor with a pleasant non touristy spot with great views across the estuary towards Llansteffan castle. The narrow sandy beach with its embryonic dunes, once at the heart of the Carmarthen Bay cockle picking industry, is a joy for those wishing to just step off the train and head for the shoreline.



Package holidays -
Carmarthenshire style...

Choose your accommodation
Whether it's a swanky hotel, HRH Prince Charles' holiday cottage or a more down to earth camping experience, there is something to suit all tastes and budgets.

Plan
Even if you intend to do nothing but relax, you can pre-plan your days (and nights) by downloading days out, events, strolls & where to stay guides from the official visitor website for Carmarthenshire, which has over 200 pages of useful information....
discovercarmarthenshire.com

Get here
Just 70 minutes from the Severn Bridge and 46 miles from Cardiff, Carmarthenshire starts where the M4 motorway ends. Come direct from Paddington Train Station or via the scenic Heart of Wales train line if coming from the Midlands or North.

Cefn Sidan ⁵



The longest beach in Wales, these 8 miles of glorious sands are multiple award winners and a favourite of sun worshippers, swimmers, walkers and explorers. Benidorm it isn't, with so much space you can mark your own area for family games whilst picnicking in the wondrous sand dunes over looking the beautiful Gower peninsula. Look out for jellyfish washed up at the high water mark, not all species sting, the most common one, the moon jellyfish, traps plankton within its mucus while pulsing itself through the water. If a windy day, head inland to explore Pembrey Country Park and forest, with its choice of outdoor adventure play areas, BBQ sites, steam railway, ski centre, toboggan, cycle and horse hire, pitch and putt as well as parkland for games and picnics.



Millennium Coastal Park ⁶

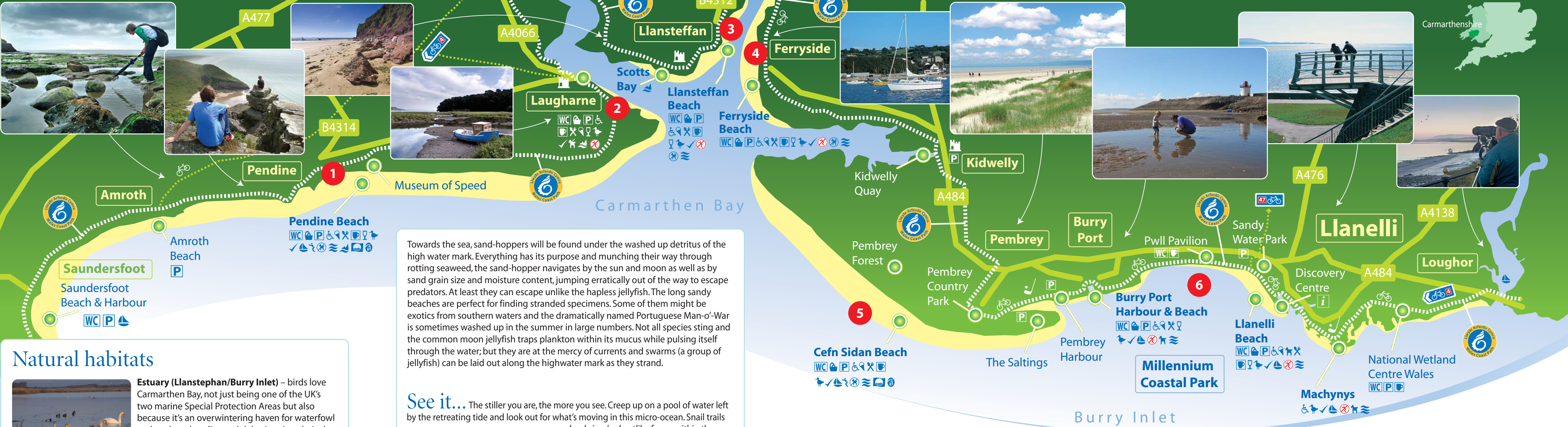


Quite simply a 22km stretch of coast with an unique array of tourist attractions, wildlife habitats and leisure facilities. The Coastal Park is blessed with several stretches of golden shoreline including Machynys, Llanelli Beach and Burry Port Sands (which actually has a choice of two beaches - one either side of the harbour!). Situated in the heart of the Coastal Park, is the newest marina in Wales with a 450 berth facility. The scenic traffic free path is a perfect location for a coastal stroll or bike ride with different cafés along the route providing inspiration for exercise. Walk around sandy water park feeding the ducks or head to the National Wetlands Centre for Wales, home to thousands of ducks geese and swans. Rated as one of Wales' best, Machynys Peninsula Golf and Country Club has dramatic views across to the Gower.



Discovering
Beaches, Coves & Coastline
of Carmarthenshire
SOUTH WEST WALES





Natural habitats



estuaries come alive at winter, the yelping call of black and white oystercatchers tripping up and down the water's edge, with clouds of the diminutive wader, the knot, swirling in over the worm rich mud.



estuary are huge cockle beds, metres deep, that attract shellfish gatherers over the autumn and early winter months. Before that, the rare rock sea lavender fills the marsh with purple flowers in August with golden samphire and sea aster, a blaze of yellow in late summer.



of the most enchanting inhabitants of a rock pool and the most crafty. Hanging out in seaweed or under rocks, almost transparent, a sharp projection over black dot eyes, lots of gangly legs, prawns fan their tails to move rapidly backwards to evade capture. A close relative, shrimps bury themselves under sand and look roughly similar to prawns but with a sandy grainy colour.

Small fish are found in rock pools with most treating it as a nursery pool before venturing out in the deep sea. As you approach a pool, small splashes will announce the presence of shanny, otherwise known as blenny or sea frog as they 'flip' off into the water from their sunbathing stance on the damp seaweed. A bullfish or harmless long spined sea scorpion fish has no swim bladder to aid buoyancy and so mooches on the bottom, camouflaged, waiting to ambush unsuspecting prey. Sweep a net under seaweed and you could find any form of fish flapping in your net but take care in returning them quickly to water.



best time for colour in the dunes with cat's-ear, wild pansy and lady's bedstraw attracting snails such as the Sandhill, hiding in the plant to avoid the hot sand.

Estuary (Llanstephan/Burry Inlet) – birds love Carmarthen Bay, not just being one of the UK's two marine Special Protection Areas but also because it's an overwintering haven for waterfowl and waders, that dive and delve into its relatively shallow waters and mud to harvest a rich picking of food: look out specifically for rafts of common scoter at sea, a dark duck with pale beak, and as

An integral part of some estuaries are salt marshes (a temperate version of mangroves), where salt resistant vegetation thrives due to the lack of waves, establishing roots in thick mud to produce great grazing habitat for birds. One of these plants is the glasswort, otherwise know as sea asparagus or samphire and has diverse uses, from seafood culinary dishes to glass making. Further out in the

Rocky coastline (Pendine) – A whole micro world exists in the pools set into the sandy coves below the cliffs west of Pendine. Amongst the deep crevices of rock and wavy seaweed fronds, tiny fish, limpets, prawns, crabs and starfish thrive in the freshly changed sea water after every high tide. A perfect cross section of the sea life caught in a snapshot in front of your nose. Prawns are one

Towards the sea, sand-hoppers will be found under the washed up detritus of the high water mark. Everything has its purpose and munching their way through rotting seaweed, the sand-hopper navigates by the sun and moon as well as by sand grain size and moisture content, jumping erratically out of the way to escape predators. At least they can escape unlike the hapless jellyfish. The long sandy beaches are perfect for finding stranded specimens. Some of them might be exotics from southern waters and the dramatically named Portuguese Man-o-War is sometimes washed up in the summer in large numbers. Not all species sting and the common moon jellyfish traps plankton within its mucus while pulsing itself through the water; but they are at the mercy of currents and swarms (a group of jellyfish) can be laid out along the highwater mark as they strand.

See it...

The stiller you are, the more you see. Creep up on a pool of water left by the retreating tide and look out for what's moving in this micro-ocean. Snail trails across rocks, shrimp's ghostlike forms within the sand, quivering sea spiders disguised as seaweed, fast moving baby mullet flickering in the shallows and of course, the all fascinating crab. Moving sideways, shore crabs vary in size, colour and shape and move only from cover when they have to; either to grab some passing morsel or to fight off a rival. Throw a small piece of meat from your sandwich into the pool and wait. Check out hermit crabs who nab empty shells into which they cram themselves to live, with one claw larger than the other, fitting perfectly in the 'door' of the shell. The wavy tentacles of the red coloured sea anemone, related to coral, theoretically can live forever but like most things in the sea, are eaten by something else before long.

Touch it...

On rocks below the high-water mark, a limpet will be found. It has amazing suction and you can feel the rough contours of its exterior shell. It's easy to pick up a periwinkle but once the tide goes out both periwinkles and limpets are at risk of drying out. Periwinkles possess a thin transparent lid to seal off the opening, while the limpet holds water under its shell, tightly clamping itself to the rock as they both digest the algae they've munched on when under water. Starfish are easy to spot and after picking one up, turn it over to feel its hundreds of tiny tube suckers underneath, used to ponderously propel themselves towards their next meal. They're carnivores and will prize open mussels or barnacles to invert their own stomach into the shellfish to dissolve the contents of their prey before retracting it back into their five fingered shape.

Smell it...

The hot dry smell of marram grass in the sand dunes can transport you to some more exotic seaside clime. The sharp spiky grass with its tightly rolled leaves and long roots, enable it to survive along the dry shoreline, anchoring the dry sand, preventing it from being blown away by the wind. Nothing beats a winters walk on the edge of the mudflats, with a strong westerly blowing salty air into your lungs. The feeling of its unique ionizing, health giving and cleansing properties, gives both energy and a great nights sleep. Seaweed clinging onto rocky shoreline is probably the best odour producer of the coastline – fresh, different to anything else you smell inland, with seaweed being a great source of iodine and when washed up at high water line, a well rotted flavour develops, ripe for sand hoppers to feast on.

Symbols

Toilets	Licensed	Dogs on lead please
Shops	Wildlife spots	Dogs allowed
Parking	Open all year	Sandy beach
Disables access	Watersports	Sand & rock
Light Refreshment	Safe swimming	Blue Flag award
Restaurant	No swimming (Paddling only)	Seaside award
Tea room	Dogs restricted (May-Sept)	Castle
		Cycle path
		Golf

Activities



Bring your own bike or hire one to really get amongst this continually transforming landscape with its wilderness of seascape and thousands of distant birds. Details www.sustrans.org.uk

Walking / Beachcombing – the 2010 Blue Flag Beaches, denoting the cleanliness of the sandy beaches, at Pendine and Cefn Sidan are breathtakingly brilliant for walking to open the lungs and celebrate the seaside. Either shadow the incoming waves or do a little



beachcombing along the high water mark: anytime after a stiff westerly wind and high tide, pieces of boat to exotic plants may be washed up from the Atlantic ocean. Further west, a breezy cliff top walk from Pendine to Amroth or the Millennium Coastal Path to the east, with views of the Gower, will keep your family well exercised.



Now rated as one of the top 10 travel destinations in the World by the *Lonely Planet Guide*, the Wales Coast Path covers over 1,337km of coastline. The Carmarthenshire section enthralers walkers with one of the most ecologically diverse and picturesque parts of the path, with bird rich estuaries, towering cliff tops and Wales' longest sandy beaches. See castles at Kidwelly, Carmarthen, Laugharne and Llansteffan Castle which was voted one of BBC Countryfile magazine's most romantic. You will also pass through villages and towns where you can buy all your local food and provisions.

The perfect sandcastle...

Draw out a square where you want your castle. Pile up the sand using wet handfuls on each corner, starting thicker at the bottom and working up to slightly thinner at the top. Make sure the sand is patted down gently and very wet. Pour a bucket of water over each corner pile when they are the same height without knocking them over. This helps the sand bond together. Build walls between them to connect the towers together using more wet sand. Don't build them too thin as they won't have enough strength to hold themselves up.

Use your spade to smooth off the top and sides before you put the detail in. It is always best to work from the top down when carving the sand. The battlements will require some patients but will make your castle look amazing. You need a hard surface to prepare the sand bricks on, like a large trowel or the back of a spade, but it must be extremely flat. Slop a dollop of very wet sand onto the back of your spade and sprinkle on a small amount of dry sand to absorb the wetness. Pat it firmly without cracking it so it is one solid lump and use another tool to cut it into a cube shape. Then this is the tricky bit, slide it off onto the wall you have made without it breaking and this will form the battlements. Repeat this process all around the top of the castle leaving a slight gap between the blocks and your castle should now be really taking shape. You can now draw a few windows and drawbridge into your castle wall and finish it off by digging a moat around it.

The Sand Dam

Build a circular wall that you can stand inside as the tide comes in around you. See how long you can stay dry as you defy mother nature. Draw a circle in the sand and dig the sand from the centre or from the outside of the line and pile it on the line forming a circular wall about 6 foot in diameter. The thicker and higher the wall the longer it will last against the incoming tide. You can decorate the wall with seaweed or stones and shells from the beach. Why not split into teams and see who can build the best one. The one that collapses first, loses. Make sure you build it below the high tide mark so the water will come in all around it.

Did you know...

The special protection of the estuary around Burry Inlet is based upon a conference agreement in Iran in 1971 for what have become known as RAMSAR sites as being areas of wetland that have international importance for flora and fauna. In this instance, the species and numbers of birds that overwinter on Wales' largest expanse of salt marsh have given it a global significance in terms of bird habitat. The best time to spot the ducks and waders is at high tide from the coastal cycle path – though binoculars help. The whole of Carmarthen Bay is a Special Area of Conservation with over six Sites of Special Scientific Interest for reasons ranging from habitat for otters, to perfect conditions for rare fish such as the shad. Nature conservation has moved on a lot since heavy industry once polluted the water and, in the Middle Ages, goose barnacles were thought to be young geese waiting to hatch!