

Geography

Where is Wales?

Wales as a country is part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (part of the European Union), and is a western promontory of the main island (Great Britain). To the east the border with England stretches for 160 miles from the Dee estuary in the north to the Severn estuary in the south. The rest of country is surrounded by the Irish Sea to the north, Cardigan Bay to the west and the Bristol Channel to the south.

What's the size of Wales?

In area Wales is 8,015 square miles or 20,758 sq.kms, or 5,129,413 acres, or 2,075,800 hectares. This represents 8.5 per cent of the area of the United Kingdom, and 0.5 per cent of the area of the European Union of 25 countries.

If Wales were an independent state it would be 153rd in the rankings of the world's 233 states and dependencies – slightly smaller than Israel (22,072 sq.kms.) and larger than Slovenia (20,273 sq.kms.), or Kuwait (17,818 sq.kms.) In area Wales is 26 per cent of the size of Scotland, 30 per cent of the size of Ireland, 48 per cent of the size of Denmark, 50 per cent of the size of Holland, 65 per cent of the size of Catalunya, 68 per cent of the size of Belgium and 144 per cent of the size of Connecticut in the USA.

How does it compare in area with the rest of the UK and Ireland:

	Sq.mls.	Sq.kms.	Acres	Hectares	% of UK	% of EU
England	50,350	130,427	32,229,213	13,042,700	53.7	3.0
Scotland	30,421	78,789	19,469,185	7,878,900	32.4	1.8
Wales	8,015	20,758	5,129,413	2,075,800	8.5	0.5
N. Ireland	5,461	14,144	3,495,058	1,414,400	5.8	0.3
UK	93,788	242,910	60,024,368	24,291,000	100	5.6
EU	1,669,807	4,324,782	1,068,676,905	432,478,200		100
Ireland	27,133	70,273	17,364,836	7,027,300		1.6

What kind of country is it?

Wales has long been known for its varied and picturesque landscape, encompassing lowland coastal areas and more mountainous regions, especially in the north. Three National Parks – Snowdonia, Brecon Beacons, and Pembrokeshire Coast - cover 20 per cent of the land area. There are also five other designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty – the Isle of Anglesey and the Clwydian Range in the north, and the Gower Peninsula and Wye Valley in the south.

Coast

Wales has a coastline of 1,680 miles (including the island of Anglesey) – i.e. 15% of the coastline of Great Britain (11,073 miles) and 23per cent of the coastline of England and Wales (5,581 miles).

Mountains

The highest mountains in Wales are in Snowdonia in the north west. The only mountain in the ten highest in Wales that lies outside Snowdonia is Pen y Fan in the Brecon Beacons. The 10 highest in Wales are:

	Mountain	Height (m)	Height (ft)
1	Snowdon	1085	3556
2	Carnedd Llewelyn	1064	3491
3	Glyder Fawr	999	3278
4	Y Garn	947	3107
5	Elidir Fawr	924	3031
6	Tryfan	915	3002
7	Aran Fawddwy	905	2969
8	Y Lliwedd	898	2946
9	Cadair Idris	893	2930
10	Pen y Fan	886	2907

The highest mountains in each of the countries of the UK are:

Country	Mountain	Height (m)	Height (ft)
Scotland	Ben Nevis	1344	4409
Wales	Snowdon	1085	3556
England	Scafell Pike	978	3209
N. Ireland	Slieve Donard	849	2785

Rivers

Welsh rivers are, for the most part relatively small. The main exception is the River Severn which, at 220 miles, is the longest river in the United Kingdom – some five miles longer than the Thames. Wales' second river, the Wye, would rank fifth in length within the UK, and our third longest river, the Dee, would be 27th. The Severn, the Wye and the Dee also flow through England for some of their length.

	River	Length (miles)	Length (kms)
1	Severn/Hafren	220	354
2	Wye/Gwy	135	215
3	Dee/Dyfrdwy	70	112
4	Towy/Tywi	68	109
5	Usk/Wysg	56	90
6	Teifi	50	80
7	Taff/Taf	40	64
8	Taf (west Wales)	30	50
9	Tawe	28	48
10	Conwy	27	43

The longest rivers in each of the countries of the UK are:

Country	River	Length (miles)	Length (kms)
Wales	Severn	220	354
England	Thames	215	346
Scotland	Tay	117	188
N. Ireland	Bann	76	122

Weather

The average weather in Wales differs slightly from the rest of the UK, with average temperatures slightly lower than England but higher than Scotland or N. Ireland, rainfall the highest of all four countries and sunshine the lowest.

	Average temp. (max)	Average temp. (min)	Sunshine (hours)	Rainfall (mm)	Days rain >=1mm	Days air frost
UK	10.0	4.6	62.9	217.4	22.1	2.2
Wales	10.5	5.5	49.6	335.8	25.7	0.9
England	11.1	5.6	72.6	175.4	21.6	0.9
Scotland	8.2	2.8	51.0	256.7	21.9	4.6
N Ireland	9.7	3.8	58.9	209.6	22.3	3.3

Weather: (Cardiff, south east Wales)

Month	Average sunlight (hour)	Av. Temp. (max)	Av. Temp. (min)	Av. Precipitation (mm.)
Jan	2	7	2	108
Feb	3	7	2	72
Mar	4	10	3	63
Apr	5	13	5	65
May	6	16	8	76
Jun	7	19	11	63
Jul	6	20	12	89
Aug	6	21	13	97
Sep	5	18	11	99
Oct	3	14	8	109
Nov	2	10	5	116
Dec	2	8	3	108

Weather: (Aberystwyth, Mid Wales)

Month	Average sunlight (hour)	Av. Temp. (max)	Av. Temp. (min)	Av. Precipitation (mm.)
Jan	2	7	2	97
Feb	3	7	2	72
Mar	4	9	3	60
Apr	5	11	5	56
May	6	15	7	65
Jun	7	17	10	76
Jul	5	18	12	99
Aug	5	18	12	93
Sep	4	16	11	108
Oct	3	13	8	118
Nov	2	10	5	111
Dec	2	8	4	96