



Barry to Llantwit Major (Wales Coast Path) walk

Glamorgan Heritage Coast : Cold Knap point, Porthkerry viaduct, Fontygary, Rhoose and Summerhouse points, Llantwit Major beach

Length 13.5 miles (21.7km) with 1,000 ft (300m) of ascent. Can be split into 2 shorter walks.

Toughness 6 / 10

Maps OS Explorer 151 (Cardiff)

Walk Notes The section of the Wales Coast Path (WCP) starts in Barry (of Barry Island and Gavin & Stacey fame), then heads west past Cold Knap Point, Porthkerry Park (with its spectacular railway viaduct), Rhoose Point (the most southerly point in Wales), Aberthaw, Summerhouse Point and Llantwit Major's beach. The walk has a mixture: headlands, sandy beaches, parkland, quiet cliff paths, dramatic cliffs, and 'stone shelf' beaches. And, its great for swimming.

This is the first section of dramatic coast and sandy beaches if starting in Chepstow (or the last, if coming from the north). Travel is easy - there is a direct train service between Barry, Rhoose and Barry, crossing the Porthkerry viaduct.

The walk starts at Barry Station, and heads for the old Barry Harbour, there used to be sand in front of the breakwater, but now the tidal(!) bay has silted up and looks picturesque, but uninviting.

Then its out to Cold Knap Point (with 270° views), then along the Knap promenade (a pebble beach, with viaduct views!). Then its over low cliffs (nicer than shingle walking at the base), and down the "golden staircase" (local legend is that a golden coin is buried underneath them) to Porthkerry Park, with its railway viaduct

The next section is a low cliff top path past former quarries to Rhoose Point, Wales most southerly point. The walk can be split in 2 here, by heading inland to Rhoose station

The next beach is Ffontgari, and a caravan park with a cliff top pub and fish and chip shop in season.

Then the path become more remote, overlooking a wetland. It comes to a valley with Aberthaw power station. Aberthaw marks the start of the 14 mile long Glamorgan Heritage Coast. Its "particularly interesting for its exposed Triassic alluvial fan deposits of carboniferous limestone" - flat stone shelf beaches, exposed at low tide, with repetitive stone patterns. The cliffs are striated (horizontal layers) in many places, making for dramatic beach vistas. Note that path past Aberthaw power station is grim, particularly a long narrow section between 2 concrete walls, which single walkers might feel unsafe.

After Aberthaw is a 2km inland diversion. Then its back to the cliff top path, and the delightful Summerhouse Point, with cliff top walking past spectacular rock shelf beaches to Llantwit Major beach

Follow a pretty valley inland to the historic centre. St Illyd's church, where St David studies, is recommended, as are the many town centre pubs. Llantwit Major, Rhoose and Barry are on the same rail line, crossing the Porthkerry viaduct on the way.

WCP Updates

See [WCP - Path Diversions](#) on the Wales Coast Path website.

[Aug-21] None on this stretch of coast, but some misleading signs to the east of Summerhouse Point.

Walk Options

This walk is quite long, so you could do it in 2 shorter parts, leaving you time to explore : a) Barry Island and Barry to Rhoose (6.5 miles), then b) Rhoose to Llantwit Major (10 miles)

The walks can be done in either direction, but starting in Rhoose and finishing in Llantwit Major and Barry makes sense, as Rhoose doesn't have a train station pub to wait in.

Barry Island Circular Option

Add 2.6 miles (4.2 km) with 150 ft (50 meters) of ascent.

Walk around Barry Island, with a loop around the southerly beaches and headlands, and return almost to the start - see our Barry Island Short walk. Recommended for a long summer walk, or for the shorter Rhoose walk.

Change at Barry for the 1 stop trip to Barry Island if returning to your car. If starting from Barry (rather than Barry Island) to be on the same line as Llantwit Major or Rhoose, add another 1.5km.

Don't be tempted (yet!) to start further back at Barry Docks station, the low rise new builds around the former dock basin haven't settled in yet, and are a little soulless (no cafes or bars). Once cafes have opened, and the scrub land has been built on, and trees have grown, it should be prettier.

Barry to Rhose Walk

Approx 4 miles / 7km. There are direct Rhose to Barry trains (and buses). Consider walking from Rhose to Barry (or Barry Island), as both have train station pubs (and more frequent trains!)

Rhose to Llantwit Major Walk

Approx 10 miles / 15km. There are direct Llantwit Major to Rhose trains (and buses).

Travel

Direct Cardiff - Barry - (Porthkerry viaduct) - Rhose - Llantwit Major - Bridgend trains (1 per hour, 1 per 2 hours on Sunday).

If doing the Barry Island Option, and starting at Barry Island, there are Cardiff - Barry - Barry Island trains (3 per hour, 2 on Sunday). For drivers, Rhose or Llantwit Major to Barry Island is quite quick, but only 1 per hour.

There is also a regular #303 bus service : Bridgend - Llantwit Major - St Athan (inland from Limpert Bay inland diversion) - East Aberthaw - Fontygary - Rhose - Barry station. It runs on to Cardiff as #304. (1 per hour, 1 per 2 hours Sundays)

Drivers can park anywhere away from town centres and the Barry Island beaches for free. Porthkerry Park (except Sunday when its £2.50 in 2017) and Cold Knap beach car park are free. Behind (north of) Barry Island station is free.

Coastline Barry

[Barry](#) has a great maritime history, especially the [Docks](#). The docks have an interesting history. In Victorian times, the coal barons were tired of paying the monopoly fees at Cardiff Docks, so built their own docks in Barry. In less than a decade, the causeway to Barry Island was built, and the town went from being a small fishing to the biggest coal port in the world. For the size of the docks, there are sadly very few heritage building left. Its saving grace is Barry Town hall - the impressive statuesque former Barry Docks Offices building. However, many residential areas of Barry have impressive houses from the Docks era. There was a great [BBC 'Welsh Towns'](#) episode on Barry, at present, its not available online.

[Barry Island](#) had a great Butlins holiday camp history. Up to 50 trains of a day of daytrippers came to Barry Island in the 1950's, in the days before airline package holidays.

Cold Knap point

Nice low headland with 270° views of the coast. The adjacent Cold Knap (pebble) beach is nice in the summer when Barry Island is busy. The former lido is now a park. Much earlier, it was the site of a Roman port. Free car park.

Porthkerry Park

[Country park](#) ([wikipedia](#)) with a pebble beach and a spectacular [13 arch railway viaduct](#). The original viaduct failed, and a temporary diversion line was built contouring around the valley while it was repaired. Free parking except Sunday (2017). CF62 3BY

The Bulwarks

The remains of an [iron age fort](#) (~ 200 BC until the Romans ~ 75 AD) that overlooked the Bristol Channel. Sadly, overgrown, mistreated and neglected. The coast path goes around it.

Fontygary

Ffontygari Bay and Point, Watch House beach. NB The town (Font-y-gary), beach and caravan park each have a different spelling.

Some sand, shingle and 'flat shelf rock' beach. Low cliffs on either side. Beware of the tides if you walk along the beach! Access to the beach is via a caravan and camping park (Cliff top bar, fish and ships, cafe, closed Jan-Feb, CF62 3ZT).

East Aberthaw

[Blue Anchor \(East Aberthaw\)](#) a pretty 14thC pub, about 500m inland

Limpert Bay (The Leys, Breaksea point)

Rocky shingle beach to the west of the power station. Access via West Aberthaw. Free Parking. CF62 4ZW

Summerhouse Point

"Flat shelf" rock beach, vertical cliffs, dramatic vistas. Coastwatch centre. Quiet. Ancient hill fort. Penry bay nearby. Free parking then access on foot along a lane : CF61 1UB.

Llantwit Major

A pretty town with a medieval centre (many listed historic buildings, cobbled streets) and several pubs. Would be a nice place to stay.

St David of Wales and St Patrick of Ireland went to college here (seriously!) on the site of [St Illtyd's Church](#). Pretty, worth a visit, [visitor centre](#) (10 - 4pm), free, 75m west of the town centre along church street, CF61 1SG. Originally Roman, the site is 1,500 years old. Founded by St. Illtud circa 508 AD, it was sacked by the Viking in 987, rebuilt in 1111, and, sadly, it suffered again in 1539, during the dissolution of the monasteries.

The sandy beach (free parking, CF61 1RF), officially called Cwm Colhugh, has dramatic cliffs. Stout Point and Pigeon Point are near by.

Warning

The [Severn Estuary](#) has the second highest tidal range in the world (after the Bay of Fundy), with typically, a 30 foot (10 metre) difference between high and low tide.

If you walk along the beach beneath high cliffs, or far out on the sands, be aware of that you can be cut off by a rising tide!

Help Us!

After the walk, please leave a [comment](#), it really helps. Thanks!

You can also upload photos to the [SWC Group on Flickr](#) ([upload your photos](#)) and [videos to](#) [Youtube](#). This walk's tags are:

By Car

Start CF62 7AE **Finish** CF61 1ST

Help

National Rail: 03457 48 49 50 • Tralveline (bus times): 0871 200 22 33 (12p/min) • TFL (London) : 0343 222 1234

Version

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Walk Directions

Barry to Rhoose

See our Barry Island short walk for the Barry Island option

1. From Barry station, turn left on Broad Steet for the walk (or turn right for pubs, shops etc.)

2. Bear left on Harbour Road (crossing over the tracks) to reach Barry Harbour (now just an unappealing silted up bay in a picturesque setting) and the Ship Hotel (pub).
3. Pass the Ship Hotel (pub). Here you join the Wales Coast Path (WCP) which you follow for the rest of the walk.
4. Continue along The Parade, a road of former B&B's facing the harbour. Then inland past nice houses to Cold Knap Point, a headland on a slight rise, but with nice 270° views.
5. Next, follow the promenade to The Knap (pebble beach, free parking, nice park inland)
6. Then its over low cliff tops, and down the "golden steps" to Porthkerry Park (parking) with it stunning Victorian rail viaduct which is still in use (the Brigend - Rhoose - Barry - Cardiff line).
7. Cross the beach, and back up to the cliff top. There is a short inland detour (check the WCP signage for improvements). You pass a caravan park with the "Ocean Lounge" cafe.
8. Then its more clifftop with old quarries behind it to Rhoose Point, the southernmost point in Wales.
9. After 500m there's a footpath off to the right, inland, 30°, which after 500m leads to Rhoose station

Rhoose to LLantwit Major

1. From Rhoose Station, head towards the sea, then veer right on a footpath
2. The next beach is Ffontygari (carvan park inland with acliff top pub). Check the tides if beach walking here.
3. The path follows the cliffs overlooking a wetland. Detour 500m inland to East Aberthaw for a nice pub
4. To continue, head down to the beach. *There is a grim section for 500m along a path with high concrete fence on both sides. Single walkers might feel unsafe here.*
5. Pass Leys beach and Breaksea Point (shingle beaches) in front of the power station.
6. Now it starts to get special - dramatic steep striated stone cliffs above 'flat rock shelf' beaches
7. The official WCP has a detour 2km inland at this point. There is a cliff coast bottom path for 1km, but its a dead end, leaving a 1km gap.
8. Rejoin the coast at Penry Bay, pass Summerhouse bay to Summerhouse Point (road, parking, iron age fort)
9. Continue along the cliff top path to Stout Point. A 100m furtherm there is an inland shortcut to Llantwit Major

10. Continue on to Llantwit Major beach
11. Cross the beach, up to the cliff top, and follow the path above the north side of the valley inland (or just follow the road if you are tired)
12. In Llantwit Major, visit St Illyd's Church if you have time.
13. Follow Station Road for the bus and train station.

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