



Zip World Velocity is the world's fastest zip line

(to Ireland on a - rare - clear day), legends (it's said to be the tomb of a giant slain by King Arthur) and the fact that you can get a train its summit. That accessibility is a big part of its appeal, and there are numerous ways to tackle the mountain, from the 120-year-old railway and the zig-zagging Miners' Track to challenging climbing pitches and notorious Crib Goch (a knife-edge steep slope on one side and a sheer drop on the other).

**Exploring Snowdonia National Park**

Snowdon is the best known - and busiest - feature of Snowdonia National Park, which stretches over 823 sq miles of peaks, valleys, forests and coastline. But there are arguably even better walks to be had in other parts. The Glyders mountain range is a steep mass of broken rocks whose heather- and boulder-covered upper reaches feel like another planet. Tryfan, the most iconic of its peaks, offers invigorating scrambling routes and is topped with two rocks called Adam and Eve - the bold can leap between the two for good luck. Further south, Cader Idris is popular with walkers and climbers, while the park as a whole was made a Dark Sky Reserve in 2015 in tribute to its clear air.

**Mountain biking**

Exploring Wales needn't just be done in walking boots - the country has some of the world's best mountain biking facilities. East of the national park, towards Wrexham, Coed Llandegla is a forest reserve with trails operated by Oneplanet (oneplanetadventure.com) that run the gamut from gentle, family-orientated routes to viciously steep ascents and hardcore jumps and drops. The impressive skills zone is a good place to practice, and the blue trail is great for beginners who want downhill sections that exhilarate without being petrifying. Back in the national park, Coed y Brenin (beicsbrenin.co.uk), near Dolgellau, was the UK's first dedicated

mountain bike centre and now has eight trails including extensive single track.

**Making waves in the valleys**

A high-profile and surreal addition to the landscape, Surf Snowdonia is a ground-breaking surf lagoon that allows you to catch consistent waves in a tree-lined valley miles from the sea. The technology is high-tech and the waves are artificial - they roll along once every 90 seconds, and form predictable heights in different parts of the lagoon, making them great for learning on - but the setting in a wide valley outside Dolgarrog is appealing and natural enough to make the experience thoroughly satisfying. Ecopod accommodation, other activities including surf kayaking and a comedic 'blob' that launches participants high in the air complete the picture. If you're inspired to get a taste of Welsh seawater, try Rhosneigr or Aberdaron.

**The best of the rest**

The range of landscapes and ingenuity of local tour guides mean there are countless other activities to undertake in North Wales. The isle of Anglesey has druidic history and offers coasteering, windsurfing and puffin-spotting trips, rafting can be undertaken at various locations including Bala and hikers can get away from Snowdon's crowds in the rolling hills of Clwydian Range near Ruthin.

There are good bases across northwest Wales, with Betws-y-Coed and Llanberis (both near Snowdon), Conwy (an appealing walled town on the coast) and Porthmadog (which offers easy access to both Snowdonia and the peaceful L?n Peninsula) among the options. While trains and buses connect the key towns, wider exploration is easiest with your own vehicle. Tour companies across the region can also help arrange trips. (www.lonelyplanet.com)



Traversing Crib Goch, one of the more challenging routes up Snowdon



Surf Snowdonia's inland lagoon offers waves amid the hills of North Wales