

# Cardiff



The roar that went up from Cardiff's Millennium Stadium when Wales clinched victory in the 2005 Six Nations rugby championship – their first grand slam since 1978 – seems to still echo around the city today. The Welsh team's return to form gave a massive boost to national confidence, a feeling reflected in the optimistic buzz that makes Cardiff such an appealing place to visit.

Cardiff was shaped in the 19th century by the world's richest man – John Patrick Crichton-Stuart, third marquess of Bute – whose architectural legacy ranges from the colourful kitsch of Cardiff Castle to the neoclassical elegance of the Civic Centre. But the 21st century is making its presence felt as the sprawling docks that generated the Bute fortune continue their transformation into the glitzy waterfront development of Cardiff Bay, centred on the futuristic flourishes of the Wales Millennium Centre and the Welsh Assembly Building.

There's plenty to explore in the city itself, but one of Cardiff's great attractions is the ease with which you can escape the urban clamour: vast acres of parkland stretch north from the castle's doorstep to the bucolic setting of Llandaff Cathedral, and the Taff Trail cycle route follows a leafy river bank to the fairy-tale setting of Castell Coch.

A short day trip by bus or train will take you to the old-fashioned seaside suburb of Penarth, the gritty industrial heritage of a rapidly regenerating Newport, or the magnificent medieval fortress and cheese capital of Caerphilly.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Gawping open-mouthed at the high-camp Victorian kitsch of **Cardiff Castle** (p85)
- Taking a tour or, better still, seeing a rugby match at the **Millennium Stadium** (p88)
- Enjoying great art at the **National Museum Wales** (p86)
- Watching the yacht-racing, cold beer in hand, at a table overlooking **Cardiff Bay** (p88)
- Strolling through 500 years of history at the open-air **St Fagans National History Museum** (p104)



■ TELEPHONE CODE: 029

■ POPULATION: 321,000

# CARDIFF (CAERDYDD)

## HISTORY

The Romans were first here in AD 75 and built the fort where Cardiff Castle now stands; the name Cardiff probably derives from the Welsh *Caer Tâf* (Fort on the River Taff).

After the Romans left Britain the site remained unoccupied until the Norman Conquest. In 1093 a Norman knight named Robert Fitzhamon (later earl of Gloucester) built himself a castle here – the remains stand within the grounds of Cardiff Castle – and a small town grew up around it. Both were damaged in a Welsh revolt in 1183 and the town was sacked in 1404 by Owain Glyndŵr during his ill-fated rebellion against English domination.

The first of the Tudor Acts of Union in 1536 put the English stamp on Cardiff and brought some stability. One of the few city-centre reminders of medieval Cardiff is St John's Church. But despite its importance as a port, market town and bishopric, only 1000 people were living here in 1801.

The city owes its stature to iron and coal mining in the valleys to the north. Coal was first exported from Cardiff on a small scale as early as 1600. In 1794 the Bute family (see the boxed text, below) – who owned much of the land from which Welsh coal was mined – built the Glamorganshire Canal for the shipment of iron from Merthyr Tydfil down to Cardiff.

In 1840 this was supplanted by the new Taff Vale Railway. A year earlier the second mar-

quess of Bute had completed the first docks at Butetown, just south of Cardiff, getting the jump on other South Wales ports. By the time it dawned on everyone what immense reserves of coal there were in the valleys – setting off a kind of gold-rush fever – the Butes were in a position to insist that it be shipped from Butetown. Cardiff was off and running.

The docklands expanded rapidly, the Butes grew staggeringly rich and the city boomed, its population mushrooming to 170,000 by the end of the 19th century and to 227,000 by 1931. A vast, multiracial workers' community known as Tiger Bay grew up in the harbourside area of Butetown. In 1905 Cardiff was officially designated a city, and a year later its elegant Civic Centre was inaugurated. The city's wealth and its hold on the coal trade persuaded Captain Robert Scott to launch his ill-fated expedition to the South Pole from here in 1910. In 1913 Cardiff became the world's top coal port, exporting some 13 million tonnes of the stuff.

But the post-WWI slump in the coal trade and the Great Depression of the 1930s slowed this expansion. The city was badly damaged by WWII bombing, which claimed over 350 lives.

Cardiff's designation in 1955 as Wales' capital – making it Europe's youngest capital city – gave it a new lease of life. It was chosen via a ballot of the members of the Welsh authorities. Cardiff received 36 votes to Caernarfon's 11 and Aberystwyth's four. Other cities who vied for the position included Swansea and

Machynlleth. Today, with the continuing regeneration of Cardiff Bay, the opening of the Welsh Assembly Building, and booming media and service sectors, Cardiff is on the up again.

## ORIENTATION

Cardiff city centre is a compact area on the east bank of the River Taff, stretching south from Cardiff Castle for 500m to Cardiff Central train station and bus station, and from the vast Millennium Stadium east to Cardiff Queen Street station. The tourist office is bang in the centre on the Hayes.

Bute Park stretches north from the castle. To its east lie the government and university buildings of Civic Centre and the student

suburb of Cathays. To its west, along Cathedral Rd, are the leafy upmarket suburbs of Pontcanna and Canton, filled with good-value guesthouses and B&Bs.

The redeveloped dockland area of Cardiff Bay lies a mile south of the city centre, clustered around the Wales Millennium Centre – not to be confused with the Millennium Stadium!

## INFORMATION

### Bookshops

**Troutmark Books** (Map p86: ☎ 2038 2814; 41-43 Castle Arcade) Biggest secondhand bookshop in the city.

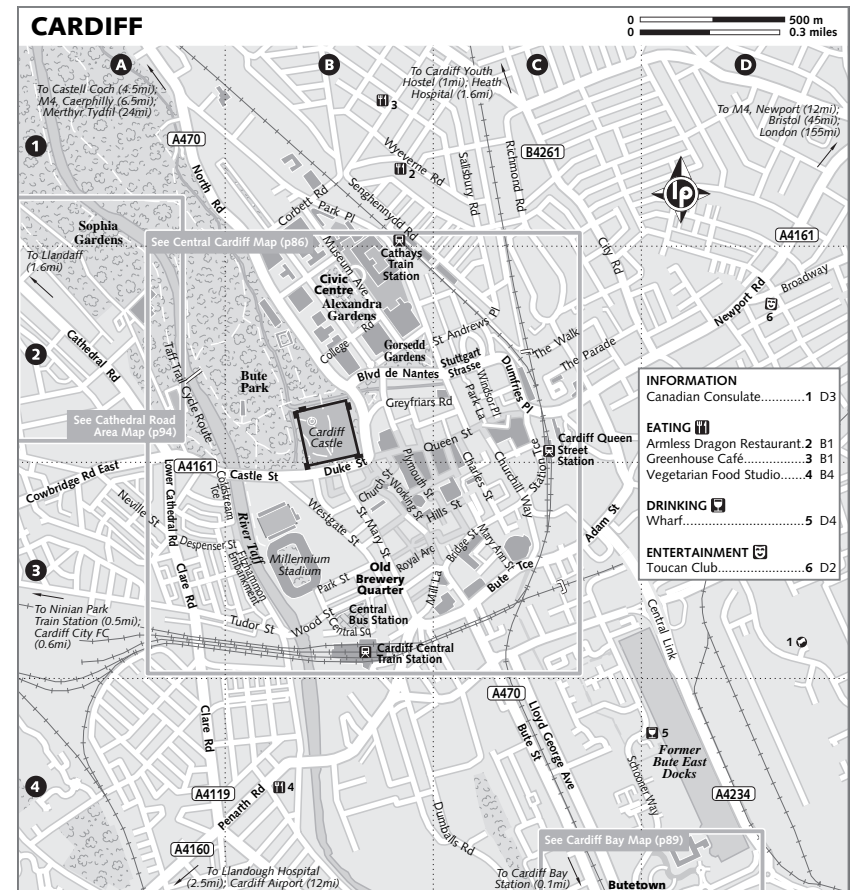
**Waterstone's** (Map p86: ☎ 2066 7549; 2a The Hayes; 9am-6pm Mon-Sat, till 8pm Thu, 11am-5pm Sun) Lots of Welsh-interest books, maps and guides.

## THE BUTE FAMILY

The Butes, an aristocratic Scottish family related to the Stuart monarchy, arrived in Cardiff in 1766 in the shape of John, Lord Mountstuart, who had served briefly as prime minister under King George I. He married a local heiress, Charlotte Jane Windsor, acquiring vast estates and mineral rights in South Wales in the process.

Their grandson, the second marquess of Bute, grew fabulously wealthy from coal mining, then in 1839 gambled his fortune to create the first docks at Cardiff. The gamble paid off. The coal-export business boomed, and his son, John Patrick Crichton-Stuart, the third marquess of Bute, became one of the richest people on the planet. He was not your conventional Victorian aristocrat; an intense, scholarly man with a passion for history, architecture, ritual and religion, he neither hunted nor fished but instead supported the antivivisection movement and campaigned for women's right to a university education.

The Butes had interests all over Britain and never spent more than about six weeks at a time in Cardiff. By the end of WWII they had sold or given away all their Cardiff assets, the fifth marquess gifting Cardiff Castle to the city in 1947. The present marquess, the seventh, lives in the family seat at Mount Stuart House on the Isle of Bute in Scotland's Firth of Clyde; another maverick, he's better known as Johnny Dumfries, the Formula One racing driver.



## CARDIFF IN...

## One Day

In the morning take a look around the **National Museum Wales** (p86), then stroll through the Victorian **shopping arcades** (p101) before stopping for lunch at **Café Minuet** (p96). After a post-prandial walk in **Bute Park** (opposite), enjoy a guided tour of the spectacular Victorian Gothic interiors at **Cardiff Castle** (opposite), then take the Waterbus down the river to **Cardiff Bay** (p88) for dinner by the waterfront at **Bosphorus** (p97) or **Ba Orient** (p97). If you're up for a late night, take the bus back to town for some live music at **Clwb Ifor Bach** (p100).

## Two Days

Follow the one-day itinerary, and kick off day two with a tour of the **Millennium Stadium** (p88), or a walk or bike ride out to **Llandaff Cathedral** (p91). After lunch, take a bus to **Castell Coch** (p105) or the **St Fagans National History Museum** (p104). Return to the city for dinner and in the evening try to catch a performance at the **Wales Millennium Centre** (p90).

## Emergency

**Heath Hospital** (☎ 2074 7747; Heath Park) Two miles north of the Civic Centre, with an accident and emergency department.

**Police Headquarters** (Map p86; ☎ 2022 2111; King Edward VII Ave)

## Internet Access

**BT Internet booths** These coin-operated booths are dotted around the city centre; they cost 10p per minute, 50p minimum. They also act as wi-fi hot spots for anyone with a BT OpenZone account.

**Cardiff Central Library** (Map p86; ☎ 2038 2116; John St; 𠂆 9am-6pm Mon-Wed & Fri, 9am-7pm Thu, 9am-5.30pm Sat) Free internet access; housed in this temporary building until the new library opens on the Hayes at the end of 2008.

**Tourist office** (see Tourist Information below) Internet access for £1 per 30 minutes.

## Laundry

**Laundrette** (Map p94; 87 Pontcanna St) This laundrette is convenient to the Cathedral Rd area.

## Left Luggage

The **tourist office** (see Tourist Information opposite) offers a left-luggage service for £3 per item per day; there are no left-luggage facilities at the train station or airport.

## Medical Services

Pharmacies rotate late opening hours; check the regional newspaper, *South Wales Echo*, for details. **Boots the Chemist** (Map p86; ☎ 2023 1291; 36 Queen St) is open till 8pm on Thursdays.

**Cardiff Shopmobility** (Map p86; ☎ 2039 9355; Bridge St) is a charity that provides wheelchairs and

electric scooters for the disabled to get around the central shopping area. There's no charge but donations are welcome.

## Money

All major UK banks (with ATMs and currency desks) are represented along Queen St and High St.

## Post

**Main post office** (Map p86; 45-46 Queens Arcade, Queen St; 𠂆 9am-5.30pm Mon-Sat)

**Post office** Cathedral Road area (Map p94; 91 Pontcanna St); Cardiff Bay (Map p89; Bute St)

## Tourist Information

**Cardiff Bay Visitor Centre** (Map p89; ☎ 2046 3833; The Tube, Harbour Drive; 𠂆 9.30am-6pm)

**Tourist office** (Map p86; ☎ 0870 121 1258; www.visitcardiff.com; Old Library, The Hayes; 𠂆 9.30am-6pm Mon-Sat, 10am-4pm Sun, till 7pm Mon-Sat Jul & Aug)

## Travel Agencies

**STA Travel** (Map p86; ☎ 2038 2350; Duke St Arcade, 11 Duke St)

## Universities

**Cardiff University** (☎ 2087 4000; www.cardiff.ac.uk) About 15,000 students study here, most living in the neighbourhoods of Cathays and Roath, north of the city centre.

## SIGHTS &amp; ACTIVITIES

Many of Cardiff's main sights, including the castle, Millennium Stadium and National Museum Wales, are clustered around the city centre. A mile to the southeast, Cardiff Bay –

once the old docks, now the city's fastest-developing district – has plenty more to see.

## Central Cardiff

## CARDIFF CASTLE

The Bute family, who transformed Cardiff from a small town into the world's biggest coal port, also transformed **Cardiff Castle** (Map p86; ☎ 2087 8100; www.cardiffcastle.com; Castle St; adult/child incl guided tour £6.95/4.30, grounds only £3.50/2.20; 𠂆 9.30am-6pm Mar-Oct, 9.30am-5pm Nov-Feb) from a medieval ruin into the landscaped grounds and kitsch Gothic fantasy you see today.

The castle complex is hidden behind high walls that follow the outline of the original Roman camp and was a secret world cut off from the outside until the Butes donated it to the city in 1947. It's a collection of buildings arranged around a grassy, peacock-inhabited courtyard, the oldest of which are the 12th-century motte-and-bailey **Norman keep** and the 13th-century **Black Tower** beside the castle entrance.

The castle's site was first occupied by the Romans in the 1st century AD. Part of the **Roman walls** remain in the southeast corner, dating from the 3rd century AD and measuring 3m across at the base. It faces a scene-stealing sculpted frieze (created by Frank Abraham in 1983) that gives a muscular impression of life under Roman occupation.

A house was built here in the 1420s by the earl of Warwick and was extended in the 17th century by the Herbert family (the earls of Pembroke), but by the time the Butes acquired it a century later it had fallen into disrepair. The first marquess of Bute hired architect Henry Holland and Holland's father-in-law, the famous landscape-architect Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, to get the house and grounds into shape.

The most recent part of the castle is the array of 19th-century towers and turrets on the west side, dominated by the colourful 40m **clock tower**. This mock-Gothic extravaganza was dreamed up by the mind-bendingly rich third marquess of Bute and his architect William Burges, a passionate eccentric who used to dress in medieval costume and was often seen with a parrot on his shoulder. Both were obsessed with Gothic architecture, religious symbolism and astrology, influences that were often combined in many of the features Burges designed, both here and at the Butes' second home at Castell Coch (p105).

The 50-minute guided tour takes you through the highlights of this flamboyant fantasy world, from the **winter smoking room**, with décor reflecting the seasons of the year (and a fright for anyone who dares listen at the door – look up as you pass through the doorway!), through the elaborate Moorish decoration of the **Arab room** (marble, sandalwood, parrots and acres of gold leaf), to the mahogany-and-mirrors narcissism of **Lord Bute's bedroom**, with a gilded statue of St John the Evangelist (the marquess' name saint) and 189 bevelled mirrors on the ceiling, which reflect the name 'John' in Greek.

The **banqueting hall** boasts a fantastically over-the-top fireplace depicting the legend of Robert the Consul and is overlooked by that medieval must-have, a minstrel's gallery. The **nursery** – perhaps the most sympathetic room in the castle – is decorated with fairy-tale characters and the **small dining room** has an ingenious table, designed so that a living vine could be slotted through it, allowing diners to pluck fresh grapes as they ate. The **roof garden** seems to underline how much of a fantasy all this really was – designed with southern Italy in mind, rather than Wales.

Housed in the Black Tower is the **Welch Regiment Museum** (Map p86; ☎ 2022 9367; www.rw.org.uk; admission included in entry to castle grounds; 𠂆 10am-5.30pm Wed-Mon Mar-Oct, 10am-4.30pm Wed-Mon Nov-Feb), which records the military achievements of South Wales' infantry regiment.

The southeastern corner of the castle complex was being redeveloped at the time of writing and is scheduled to open in late 2007 as an interpretation centre, tearoom and new home for the Regimental Museum of 1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards.

## BUTE PARK

To the west of the castle flows the River Taff, which is flanked to either side by lovely parklands that extend northwest for 1.5 miles to Llandaff. Bute Park, landscaped in the 1870s by Scots landscape architect Andrew Pettigrew and donated to the city along with the castle in 1947, Sophia Gardens, Pontcanna Fields and Llandaff Fields were all part of the Bute holdings that once extended to Castell Coch.

The southern edge of Bute Park, running west from the castle along Castle St, is a low wall topped with stone figures of lions, seals, bears and other creatures. The **Animal Wall** was designed by castle architect William Burges but only completed in 1892 after his death;

it was extended and more animals added in the 1920s. A newspaper cartoon strip in the '30s brought the animals to life and many Cardiff kids grew up thinking the animals came alive at night.

In Cooper's Field, the part of the park just west of the castle, is a stone circle – not Neolithic but *fin de siècle* – erected in 1899 when Cardiff hosted the Royal National Eisteddfod (see p47). Such so-called **gorsedd stones** are found all over Wales where *eisteddfodau* (gatherings or sessions) have been held.

Nearby are the foundations of the 13th-century **Blackfriars Priory**, which was destroyed in 1404 when Owain Glyndŵr attacked Cardiff, and later rebuilt, only to be finally vacated in 1538 when the monasteries were dissolved.

### NATIONAL MUSEUM WALES

Northeast of Cardiff Castle is the Civic Centre, an early 20th-century complex of neo-Baroque buildings in gleaming white Portland stone, set around the green lawns and colourful flowerbeds of Alexandra Gardens. It houses the City Hall, police headquarters, law courts, crown offices and Cardiff University.

In the southeast corner is the splendid **National Museum Wales** (Map p86; ☎ 2039 7951; www.muuseumwales.ac.uk; Gorsedd Gardens Rd; admission free; 11am–5pm Tue–Sun), one of Britain's best museums, covering natural history and geology, art and archaeology. At the time of research the museum was undergoing a major refurbishment, scheduled for completion in late 2007; during this time some of the galleries may be closed.

The Evolution of Wales exhibit takes you through 4600 million years of geological history, with a rollicking multimedia display that places Wales into a global context. Spectacular films of volcanic eruptions and aerial footage of the country's stunning landscape explain how its scenery was formed, while model dinosaurs and woolly mammoths help keep the kids interested.

The natural-history displays range from cunningly camouflaged insects to the awesome 9m-long skeleton of a humpback whale that washed up near Aberthaw in 1982. The world's largest turtle (2.88m by 2.74m), which was found on Harlech beach, is now stuck here, suspended on wires from the ceiling.

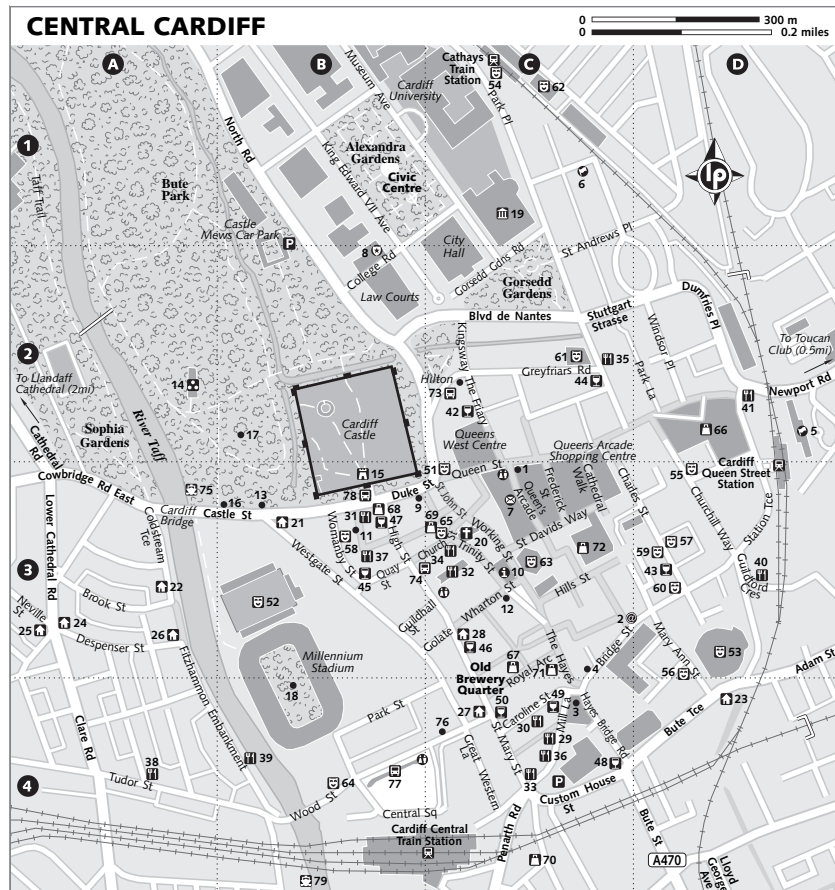
The art gallery houses an incredible collection – many impressionist and postimpressionist pieces were bequeathed to the museum in 1952 (with more in 1963) by the Davies sisters, Gwendoline and Margaret, granddaughters of 19th-century coal and shipping magnate David Davies (see p231). Treasures include luminous works by Monet and Pissaro, Sisley's *The Cliff at Penarth* (the artist was mar-

ried in Cardiff) and portraits by Renoir, including the shimmering, soft and extraordinarily attractive *La Parisienne*. The sisters' favourite was Cézanne, but there are works by Matisse, too, and the anguished *Rain: Auvers* by Van Gogh, who killed himself just a few days after finishing the painting. The Pre-Raphaelites are well represented, as is Rodin, with a cast of *The Kiss*. Older works include those by El Greco, Poussin and Botticelli.

Welsh artists such as Richard Wilson, Thomas Jones, David Jones and Ceri Richards are all here, as well as Gwen and Augustus John – a highlight is John's beguilingly angelic portrayal of Dylan Thomas. Modern works include pieces by Francis Bacon, David Hockney and Rachel Whitread.

The museum's Glanely Gallery is an interactive area where you can peer at items from the collection through microscopes and use interpretive computers. There are numerous changing exhibitions, recitals and a holiday programme of children's events.

You'll need at least three hours to see the museum properly – and it could easily take up



INFORMATION		Royal Hotel.....27 C4		Cardiff University Students' Union.....54 C1		
Boots the Chemist.....1 C3	Cardiff Central Library.....2 C3	Sandringham Hotel.....28 C3	Ask.....29 C4	Chilli's.....55 D3	Cineworld.....56 D3	
Cardiff Central Library (new building from September 2008).....3 C4	Cardiff Shopmobility.....4 C3	Café Minuet.....31 B3	Bali.....30 C4	Club X.....57 D3	Clwb Ifor Bach.....58 B3	
Irish Consulate.....5 D2	Italian Consulate.....6 C1	Cardiff Central Market.....32 C3	Cardiff Irish Consulate.....5 D2	Chambers.....33 C4	Exit Bar.....59 D3	
Main Post Office.....7 C3	Police Headquarters.....8 B2	Cornish Bakehouse.....34 C3	Chambers.....33 C4	Da Venditto.....35 C2	Jongleurs.....(see 64)	
STA Travel.....9 B3	Tourist Office.....10 C3	Da Venditto.....35 C2	Chambers.....33 C4	Joboraj II.....36 C4	Locker Room.....60 D3	
Troumatrak Books.....11 B3	Troutmark Books.....11 B3	Joboraj II.....36 C4	Chambers.....33 C4	Madame Fromage.....37 B3	New Theatre.....61 C2	
Waterstone's.....12 C3	Waterstone's.....12 C3	Madame Fromage.....37 B3	Chambers.....33 C4	New York Deli.....(see 69)	Sherman Theatre.....62 C1	
SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES		Chambers.....33 C4	Chambers.....33 C4	Riverside Cantonese.....38 A4	St David's Hall.....63 C3	
Animal Wall.....13 B3	Blackfriars Priory.....14 A2	Chambers.....33 C4	Chambers.....33 C4	Riverside Real Food Market.....39 B4	Vue.....64 B4	
Cardiff Castle.....15 B3	Cardiff Castle.....15 B3	Chambers.....33 C4	Chambers.....33 C4	Thai House Restaurant.....40 D3	Wish Club.....65 C3	
Gatehouse.....16 B3	Gorsedd Stones.....17 B2	Chambers.....33 C4	Chambers.....33 C4	Zushi.....41 D2	SHOPPING	
Millennium Stadium.....18 B4	National Museum Wales.....19 C1	Chambers.....33 C4	Chambers.....33 C4	Capitol Shopping Centre.....66 D2	Cardiff Antiques Centre.....67 C3	Cardiff Central Market.....(see 32)
St John's Church.....20 C3	Welch Regiment Museum.....(see 15)	Chambers.....33 C4	Chambers.....33 C4	Castle Welsh Crafts.....68 B3	High Street Arcade.....69 C3	Jacob's Market.....70 C4
SLEEPING		Chambers.....33 C4	Chambers.....33 C4	Riverside Real Food Market.....(see 39)	Spiller's Records.....71 C3	St David's Centre.....72 C3
Angel Hotel.....21 B3	Austin's Guest House.....22 A3	Chambers.....33 C4	Chambers.....33 C4	Baycar Bus Stop.....73 C2	Baycar Bus Stop.....74 B3	Cardiff Bridge Waterbus Jetty.....75 A3
Big Sleep.....23 D4	Millers Tavern.....24 A3	Chambers.....33 C4	Chambers.....33 C4	Cardiff Bus Office.....76 C4	Cardiff Central Bus Station.....77 B4	City Sightseeing Bus Stop.....78 B3
NosDa @ Cardiff Backpackers.....25 A3	NosDa @ The Riverbank.....26 A3	Chambers.....33 C4	Chambers.....33 C4	Café Jazz.....(see 28)	Cardiff Arms Park.....52 B3	Taff Meade Embankment Waterbus Jetty.....79 B4
ENTERTAINMENT		Chambers.....33 C4	Chambers.....33 C4	Cardiff Arms Park.....52 B3	Cardiff International Arena.....53 D3	

a whole day. There are half-hour tours focusing on various aspects of the gallery every Saturday at 2pm, and regular classical and jazz concerts – call or check the website for information.

### MILLENNIUM STADIUM

The giant **Millennium Stadium** (Map p86; ☎ 2082 2228; www.cardiff-stadium.co.uk; Westgate St; tours adult/child £5.50/3; 10am–6pm Mon–Sat, 10am–5pm Sun) squats like a steaming spaceship on the River Taff's east bank. Attendance at international rugby and football matches has increased dramatically since this 72,500-seat, three-tiered stadium with sliding roof was completed in time to host the 1999 Rugby World Cup.

Not everyone is happy with it: one critic called it 'an absurdly overexerted structure... that rears over the surrounding streets like a sumo wrestler'. The stadium cost £110 million to build – money that some feel could have been better spent elsewhere in the city – and big matches paralyse the city centre. But when the crowd begins to sing, the whole city resonates and all is forgiven.

The stadium has seven restaurants and 22 public bars (drinking is allowed during rugby matches but not football matches). The grass turf is actually grown on thousands of pallets (at RAF St Athan in the Vale of Glamorgan), which can be taken up for big concerts.

It's well worth taking a tour – you get to walk through the players' tunnel and sit in the VIP box. The entrance for guided tours is at Gate 3 on Westgate St. For details of matches, see p101.

### ST JOHN'S CHURCH

Jutting above the city-centre shopping street is the graceful Gothic lantern tower belonging to the 15th-century parish church of St John the Baptist, with its delicate stonework that's almost like filigree. A church has stood on this site since at least 1180. Inside are simple, elegant arches: a calm retreat from the street. Regular lunchtime organ concerts are held here.

### Cardiff Bay

In the 1880s Cardiff grew from one of the smallest towns in Wales to the largest, thriving on the money made by the rapidly expanding coal-export industry. In 1913 more than 13 million tonnes were exported from Cardiff docks, but after WWII demand slumped. The docklands deteriorated into a wasteland of empty basins, cut off from the city by the railway em-

bankment. The bay outside the docks – which has one of the highest tidal ranges in the world (more than 12m between high and low water) – was ringed for up to 14 hours a day by smelly, sewage-stained mudflats. The nearby residential area of Butetown became a neglected slum.

Since 1987 the area has been completely redeveloped as Cardiff Bay, a massive commercial centre filled with gleaming new shopping centres, hotels, restaurants and government buildings. A state-of-the-art tidal barrage has turned the stinking mudflats into a vast freshwater lake, alive with yacht races on summer weekends.

On Sundays from mid-June to September there are street performers and various shows around the bay. The Cardiff Harbour Festival takes place on the August Bank Holiday weekend, with watery action in the bay itself as well as live music and fireworks.

**Cardiff Bay Visitor Centre** (Map p89; ☎ 2046 3833; Harbour Drive; 1 9.30am–6pm), housed in an oval tubular structure on the eastern side of the harbour known as the Tube, has an immense model of Cardiff Bay and stocks maps and booklets on the area and its history.

### NATIONAL ASSEMBLY BUILDING

The **Pierhead Building** is one of the area's few Victorian survivors, a red-brick French-Gothic Renaissance confection built with Bute family money for the Cardiff Municipal Railway Co to impress the maritime traffic; the architect was a pupil of William Burges (who designed Cardiff Castle and Castell Coch). It now houses the **National Assembly Visitor Centre** (☎ 2089 8200; www.wales.gov.uk; admission free; 1 10.30am–6pm Easter–Sep, 10.30am–4.30pm Oct–Easter), a glitzy PR exercise explaining who's who and what's what at the Assembly using state-of-the-art exhibits and interactive computer displays.

Looming over it like a giant manta ray is Wales' most controversial architectural project, the **National Assembly Building** (Map p89; ☎ 2089 8477; www.wales.gov.uk; admission free; 1 8am–6pm Mon & Fri, 8am–8pm Tue–Thu year-round, 10.30am–6pm Sat & Sun Easter–Sep, 10.30am–4.30pm Sat & Sun Oct–Easter) – Y Senedd in Welsh – a striking structure of concrete, slate, glass and steel with a dramatic canopy roof. The underside of the roof is lined with red cedar and undulates in waves, mimicking the waves in the bay. It houses the debating chamber of the Welsh National Assembly, committee rooms and a public gallery where you can observe the debating chamber.

**CARDIFF BAY**

0 200 m  
0 0.1 miles

**INFORMATION**

Cardiff Bay Visitor Centre.....1 B6  
Post Office.....2 A5

**SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES**

Bay Island Voyages.....3 B6  
Butetown History & Arts Centre...4 A5  
Cardiff Bay Cruises.....5 B6  
Coal Exchange.....6 A5  
Goleulong 2000 Lightship.....7 B6  
National Assembly Building.....8 B5  
Norwegian Church.....9 B6  
Pierhead Building.....10 B5  
Roald Dahl Plaz.....11 B5  
Techniquest.....12 A6  
Wales Millennium Centre.....13 B5  
Water Sculpture.....14 B5

**SLEEPING**

Jolyons Hotel.....15 A5  
St David's Hotel & Spa.....16 A6

**EATING**

Ba Orient.....17 B6  
Bosphorus.....18 A6  
Buff's Restaurant.....19 A5  
Caribbean Restaurant.....20 A5  
Norwegian Church.....(see 9)  
Scallops.....21 A6  
Woods Bar & Brasserie.....22 A6

**DRINKING**

Bute Dock Hotel.....23 A5  
El Jenkins.....24 A5  
Salt.....25 A6

**ENTERTAINMENT**

Coal Exchange.....(see 6)  
Glee Club.....(see 28)  
Point.....26 A5  
Wales Millennium Centre.....(see 13)

**SHOPPING**

Craft in the Bay.....27 A5  
Mermaid Quay.....28 A6

**TRANSPORT**

Bay Island Voyages.....29 B6  
Baycar Bus Stop.....30 B5  
Baycar Bus Stop.....31 A5  
Baycar Bus Stop.....32 B5  
Cardiff Road Train.....33 A6

See Cardiff Map (p83)

The building has won awards for its environmentally friendly design, which includes a huge rotating cowl on the roof for power-free ventilation and a gutter system that collects rainwater for flushing the toilets. The lobby and surrounding area is littered with public artworks, including the 'meeting place', a curved bench made of 3-tonne slate blocks from Blaenau Ffestiniog, thoughtfully provided as a place for protesters to rest their legs.

The Assembly usually meets in a plenary session from 2pm on Tuesday and Wednesday, and seats in the public gallery are on a first-come, first-served basis. Guided tours of the building are available, taking in the debating chamber, committee rooms and the visitor centre. It's advisable to book a tour, but you can drop in at the Pierhead visitor centre and ask; if there's space available, they will usually let you tag along with a larger group.

### HARBOURSIDE

The main commercial centre at Cardiff Bay is called **Mermaid Quay**, stacked with bars, restaurants and high-street shops, rising above the Waterbus jetty. To its east is **Roald Dahl Plaz**, a vast public space (it used to be a dock basin) named after the Cardiff-born writer that serves as an open-air performance area, overseen by a soaring, stainless-steel **water sculpture**.

On the east side of the harbour, looking like it's popped out of the pages of a storybook, is the **Norwegian Church** (Map p89; ☎ 2045 4899; Harbour Dr; admission free; 1 9am–5pm), a white-slatted wooden building with a black witch's-hat spire. Built in 1869 beside the long-gone Bute West Dock, it was a seamen's mission, modelled on the lines of a traditional Norwegian village church. It fell into disrepair, but remained a place of worship until 1974; Roald Dahl was christened here, and served as president of the preservation trust that restored and renovated the church. It has now been reincarnated as an arts centre with an excellent café, interesting exhibitions, concerts and arts courses.

Nearby is the bright-red **Goleulong 2000 Lightship** (Map p89; ☎ 2048 7609; www.lightship2000.org.uk; admission free; 1 10am–5pm Mon–Sat, 2–5pm Sun), which used to be stationed off Rhossili, warning sailors away from the Helwick Swatch, a treacherous sandbank. It now houses a Christian centre with bookshop, café and exhibitions; you can also check out the neat little cabins and climb to the top of the light tower for the view.

## WALES MILLENNIUM CENTRE

The centrepiece and symbol of Cardiff Bay's regeneration is the outstanding **Wales Millennium Centre** (Map p89; % 0870 040 2000; www.wmmc.org.uk; Bute Place; admission free), an architectural masterpiece of stacked Welsh slate in shades of purple, green and grey topped with an over-arching bronzed steel shell.

The roof above the main entrance is pierced by 2m-high, letter-shaped, stained-glass windows that spell out the words '*Creu Gwir fel Gwydr o Ffwrnais Awen*' (Creating truth like glass from inspiration's furnace), and 'In these stones horizons sing', composed by Gwyneth Lewis, Wales' National Poet 2005–06.

The centre is home to several major cultural organisations, including the Welsh National Opera, Academi (Welsh National Literature Promotion Agency), Hijinx Theatre, Ty Cerdd (Music Centre of Wales) and the dance company Diversions. You can wander through the public areas at will, or go on an official **guided tour** (adult/child £5/4; % 9am–5pm) that will take you behind the giant letters, onto the main stage and into the dressing rooms.

## TECHNIQUEST

The biggest and best science and technology discovery centre in Britain, **Techniquest** (Map p89; % 2047 5475; www.tquest.org.uk; Stuart St; adult/child £6.90/4.80; % 9.30am–4.30pm Mon–Fri, 10.30am–5pm Sat & Sun) has more than 160 engrossing, fun, hands-on exhibits with absorbing explanations. You can explore whirlwinds, race bubbles, play a harp with no strings and more – equally enjoyable for under-fives, stoned students and inquisitive adults. The shop has lots of quirky stuff and is reasonably priced. There's also a planetarium, which stages night-sky demonstrations and science shows.

## BUTETOWN

Mount Stuart Sq, 300m northwest of the waterfront, is the heart of Victorian Butetown, once the residential district that housed the dock workers. The old **Coal Exchange** (Map p89; % 2049 4917; www.coalexchange.co.uk; Mount Stuart Sq) was once the nerve centre of the Welsh coal trade, and for a time the place where international coal prices were set – it was here in March 1908 that a coal merchant wrote the world's first-ever £1 million cheque. The Exchange now houses a vibrant arts and performance venue.

The **Butetown History & Arts Centre** (Map p89; % 2025 6757; www.bhac.org; 4–5 Dock Chambers, Bute St; admission free; % 10am–5pm Tue–Fri, 11am–4.30pm Sat & Sun) is devoted to preserving oral histories, documents and images of the docklands, and its exhibits put the area into both an historical and present-day context.

## CARDIFF BAY BARRAGE

The Cardiff Bay Barrage is a 0.75-mile-long dam enclosing the harbour. It took five years to build and created a new waterfront around 8 miles in length – a freshwater lake at the mouth of the Rivers Taff and Ely. It was a controversial project, as its construction involved flooding mudflats that had provided an important habitat for migrating and breeding waterfowl. The barrage includes sluice gates to control the water flow, three lock gates to allow passage for boats, and a fish pass that lets migrating salmon and sea trout enter and leave the rivers.

The toy-town **Cardiff Road Train** (Map p89; % 2052 2729; adult/child return £4/2; % hourly 11am–5pm), with live commentary, runs from Stuart St (opposite Techniquest) to the barrage along a landscaped embankment on the east side of Cardiff Bay (and is the only way to travel this route – the east side of the bay is normally closed to the public).

You can also get there by bus or car (head for Penarth Marina) or take the Waterbus ferry.

## BOAT TRIPS

**Bay Island Voyages** (Map p89; % 01446-420692; www.bayisland.co.uk) offers a range of cruises aboard high-speed RIBs (rigid inflatable boats), ranging from a half-hour thrash around Cardiff Bay to a two-hour trip to Flatholm Island in the middle of the Severn Estuary. They are based at a trailer kiosk parked near the Pierhead Building.

**Cardiff Bay Cruises** (Map p89; % 2047 2004; www.cardiffbaycruises.com) operates three-hour evening cruises (£43 per person including three-course dinner) leaving from the marina at Mermaid Quay at 7.30pm.

## GETTING THERE & AWAY

### Boat

The most appealing way to reach Cardiff Bay is on the **Cardiff Waterbus** (Map p86; % 07940 142409; www.cardiffwaterbus.com), which runs from jetties in the city centre to Mermaid Quay along the River Taff (£2 one way, 25 minutes); there are departures hourly, from 11.30am

to 5.30pm, from Taff Meade Embankment near the train station, and twice daily, at 12.30pm and 4.30pm, from Cardiff Bridge near the castle. There are also Waterbus services from Mermaid Quay to the Cardiff Bay Barrage at Penarth (£2 one way, 20 minutes), with departures hourly from 10am to 5pm daily, and also from 6.30pm to 10.30pm on Saturdays.

## Bus

The Baycar shuttle bus 6 runs to Cardiff Bay from the city centre (£1, 10 minutes, every 10 to 15 minutes), with stops outside the Hilton Hotel (on North Rd, east of the castle), St Mary St and Penarth Rd (just south of Cardiff Central train station).

## Train

Shuttle trains run from Cardiff Queen St station to Cardiff Bay station (£1, four minutes, four hourly Monday to Saturday, seven daily on Sunday), from where the harbour is a quarter-mile walk. From Cathays or Central stations you have to change at Queen St.

## Llandaff

Llandaff is a peaceful suburb 2 miles north of the centre, a village clustered around a green that has been swallowed up by the expanding city. Set in a hollow on the west bank of the River Taff is the imposingly beautiful **Llandaff Cathedral** (Map p89; % 2056 4554; www.llandaffcathedral.org.uk; Cathedral Rd; admission free; % 7.30am–6pm Mon–Tue, Thu & Sat, 7.30am–7.30pm Wed, 7.30am–6.30pm Sun), built on the site of a 6th-century monastery founded by St Teilo.

The present cathedral dates from 1130 – it crumbled throughout the Middle Ages, and during the Reformation and Civil War it was used as an alehouse and then an animal shelter. Derelict by the 18th century, it was largely rebuilt in the 19th century and extensively restored after being damaged by a German bomb in 1941. The towers at the western end epitomise the cathedral's fragmented history – one was built in the 15th century, the other in the 19th. Inside, plain glass windows provide a striking clarity of light. A giant arch carries the organ and the huge, aluminium sculpture *Majestas* – its modern style a bold shock in contrast to Sir Jacob Epstein's gracious, vaulted space. Pre-Raphaelite groupies will like the Burne-Jones reredos (screens) in St Dyfrig's chapel

and the stained glass by Rossetti and William Morris' company.

Buses 24, 25, 33, 33A and 62 (15 minutes, every 10 to 15 minutes) run along Cathedral Rd to Llandaff.

## WALKING TOUR

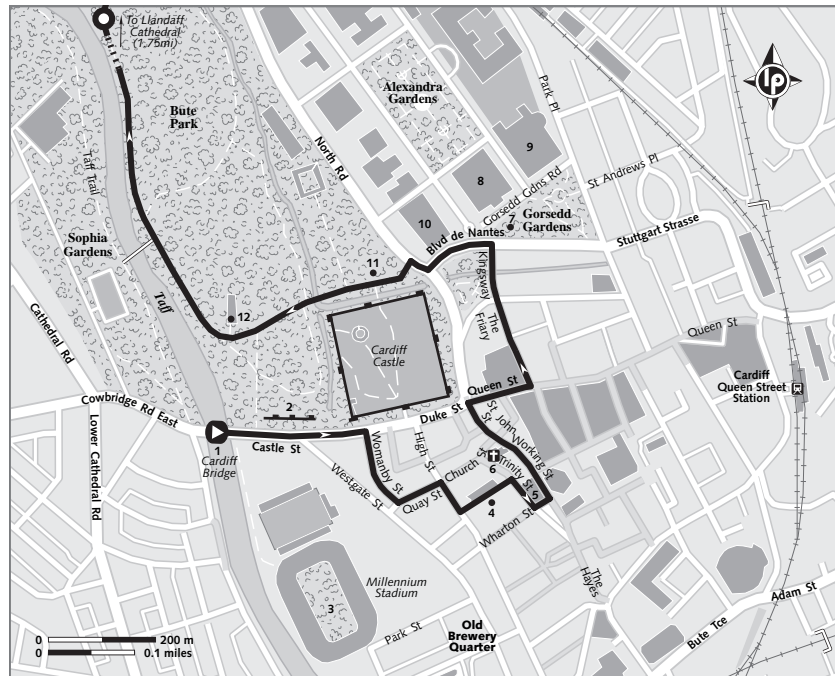
This tour consists of two parts. The first is a meander around the city centre, taking in the major sights. The second part strikes out through Bute Park to reach the cathedral at Llandaff.

For the first part of this walk, start from **Cardiff Bridge (1)** on Castle St, head east towards Cardiff Castle on the north side of the street, and take a look at the creatures perched on top of the **Animal Wall (2)**; p85). Originally by the castle's south gate, the animals were moved here after WWI. Turn right on Womanby St, which is lined with warehouses. 'Womanby' has Viking roots and possibly means 'the strangers' quarter' or 'quarter of the keeper of the hounds'. On your right you'll see the **Millennium Stadium (3)**; p88) looming over you.

Take a left on Quay St, then right on High St and left again to enter the **Central Market (4)** – this cast-iron market hall has been selling fresh produce and hardware since 1891. There's an old market office and clock tower in the centre. Exit on the far side on Trinity St; across the street to your right is the **Old Library (5)**, which houses the tourist office. The south façade features figures representing calligraphy, literature, printing, rhetoric and study. The motto '*Ny bydd ddoeth ny ddarlleno*' means 'he will not be wise who will not read'.

Go left around the Old Library and then north on Working St towards the castle, past **St John's Church (6)**; p88). When you reach the junction with Queen St go right, then left into the Friary. Continue across the Blvd de Nantes (named after one of Cardiff's twin towns) to leafy **Gorsedd Gardens (7)**. Looming over the gardens are the splendid **City Hall (8)**, the **National Museum Wales (9)**; p86) and the **Law Courts (10)**. Turn left, and cross busy North Rd to enter **Bute Park (11)**; p85).

For the second part of the walk, follow the path into the park past the ruins of **Blackfriars Priory (12)**; p86) on the right, then turn right and follow the east bank of the river northwards along a tree-shaded path for a mile until you reach a weir. Cross the footbridge



### WALKING TOUR

**Part One** 1 mile, 30 minutes  
**Part Two** 2 miles, one hour

above the weir and take the footpath that bears slightly left across the playing fields (sign-posted Pontcanna).

When you come to a sealed, tree-lined path turn right and follow it for another half-mile to the busy road of Western Avenue. Turn left, cross the road via the footbridge and continue past Llandaff Rugby Club, then turn right on a footpath that passes between rugby pitches on the left and a cemetery on the right. You will emerge at the foot of Cathedral Close with **Llandaff Cathedral** (p91) rising beyond.

### CARDIFF FOR CHILDREN

A friendly, manageable city, Cardiff is a great place for kids and has a particularly good range of child-friendly sights. Possibly best of all is **Techniquet** (p90) at Cardiff Bay, but the **National Museum Wales** (p86) is also well geared towards younger visitors. Children will enjoy

the **Cardiff Road Train** (p90) at Cardiff Bay and **boat trips** (p90) to visit the barrage. If the sun's shining, there are the wide expanses of **Bute Park** (p85) to explore. Just outside Cardiff is the splendid **St Fagans National History Museum** (p104), with lots of activities during the summer, and the great castles of **Caerphilly** (p105) and **Castell Coch** (p105).

### TOURS

**City Sightseeing** (☎ 2038 4291; www.guidefriday.com; 1 daily Apr-Oct, Sat & Sun only Nov-Dec & Mar) runs open-top bus tours of the city, departing every 30 to 60 minutes from outside Cardiff Castle and taking in the Civic Centre, Cardiff Bay and the Millennium Stadium. Tickets (adult £7.50, child £3) are valid for 24 hours, and you can hop on and off at any of the stops. A nonstop circuit takes an hour.

There's a one-hour, wheelchair-friendly **Creepy Cardiff Ghost Tour** (☎ 07980 975135; www.creepycardiff.com; adult/child £5/4) that starts outside the National Museum Wales at 7.30pm most nights; book in advance.

See also p90 for details of boat trips from Cardiff Bay.

### FESTIVALS & EVENTS

The biggest event on Cardiff's calendar is the five-week **Cardiff Festival** (☎ 2087 2087; www.cardiff-festival.com), running from late June to early August. Events in the festival include the Welsh Proms (10 days of concerts at St David's Hall); as well as jazz, roots and world music at a variety of venues; an international food and drink festival; funfairs, music and street theatre; open-air theatre at the St Fagans National History Museum; and a carnival at Mermaid Quay with samba bands and dance troupes. The fun culminates with the UK's largest free outdoor festival, the Big Weekend (first weekend in August), with the Lord Mayor's Parade, a funfair and live bands at the Civic Centre.

Cardiff's gay-pride festival, **Mardi Gras** (☎ 2046 1564; www.cardiffmardigras.co.uk), is held in late August or early September at Cooper's Field, behind the castle. It gets bigger every year and local clubs hold special postcarnival events.

**Gŵyl Ifan** (☎ 2056 3989; www.gwylifan.org) is a Welsh folk-dancing festival held over three days in late June. It includes a grand procession through the city centre, a fair on the lawns outside City Hall, mass dancing at Cardiff Bay and workshops at the Thistle Hotel.

The 11-day **International Film Festival of Wales** (☎ 2031 1082; www.iffw.co.uk) is held in November, with sessions promoting new Welsh talent, glitzy premiere screenings, debates and guest appearances. There's also the opportunity to vote in the Audience Award for the best Welsh feature film.

### SLEEPING

It can be almost impossible to find a bed in the city centre on big sporting weekends, especially rugby internationals, so keep an eye on the fixtures and choose another date or book well in advance. The tourist office can book a room for you for a fee of £2.

**A Space in the City** (☎ 0845 260 7050; www.aspaceinthecity.co.uk) is an agency that lets out luxury, short-stay apartments in the city centre and at Cardiff Bay; rates begin at around £90 a night for a one-bedroom flat and there's a minimum two-night stay.

The best area for midrange accommodation is tree-lined Cathedral Rd, a 15- to 20-minute walk from the centre, or a £3 to £4 taxi ride from the train or bus station.

### City Centre BUDGET

**NosDa @ Cardiff Backpackers** (Map p86; ☎ 2034 5577; www.cardiffbackpacker.com; 98 Neville St; dm s/d £18/28/43) This is a well-run, popular independent hostel just over half a mile from the train and bus stations. There are singles, doubles and dorms, and a funky, late-opening bar to match the cheery brightness of the rest of the place.

**NosDa @ The Riverbank** (Map p86; ☎ 2037 8866; www.nosda.co.uk; 53-59 Despensers St; dm/s/d £19/36/52; p i ) You won't find a budget bed any closer to the city centre than this stylishly refurbished hostel right across the river from the Millennium Stadium. It's family-friendly, and there's an attractive in-house bar and restaurant.

**Millers Tavern** (Map p86; ☎ 2023 7605; janet@themillers-tavern.com; 3-5 Brook St; s/d from £25/40) If you don't mind staying upstairs from a lively real-ale pub, this no-frills B&B is another decent city-centre choice, with a guest kitchen where you can rustle up your own grub.

**Austin's Guest House** (Map p86; ☎ 2037 7148; www.hotelcardiff.com; 11 Coldstream Tce; s/d from £35/45) The location is the main attraction here, just five minutes' walk from the castle. The bedrooms are pretty basic (there are cheaper ones with shared toilets) and the owner is friendly and helpful.

### MIDRANGE

**Sandringham Hotel** (Map p86; ☎ 2023 2161; www.sandringham-hotel.com; 21 St Mary St; s/d from £40/55) They don't come much more central than the Sandringham. It may be nothing special in the décor department, but it's friendly and welcoming, and right in the thick of things – a good place to stay if you're here for the nightlife. There's a 24-hour reception, and no questions asked if you stagger in at 3am. Ask for a top-floor room at the back if you want to avoid street noise.

**Big Sleep** (Map p86; ☎ 2063 6363; www.thebigsleephotel.com; Bute Tce; d £58-120; p i ) Billed as a designer hotel on a budget and housed in a mirrored tower block, this place feels stark and functional despite the self-consciously cool colour schemes, Ikea furniture and (mostly) spacious rooms. Not bad value – especially on Sunday nights, when prices plunge – given the location and comfort level.

### TOP END

**Angel Hotel** (Map p86; ☎ 2064 9200; www.paramount-hotels.co.uk/angel; Castle St; s/d from £95/105; p i )

Across the street from the castle, this lavishly refurbished Victorian confection was founded in 1883 by the third marquess of Bute. The rooms are richly furnished – many have castle views – and the lavish décor just manages to stay on the right side of chintzy.

**Royal Hotel** (Map p86; % 2055 0750; www.theroyalhotelcardiff.com; 10 St Mary St; d £119-169; j ) Egyptian cotton sheets, goose-down pillows and fluffy bath robes contribute to a high pamper factor at this central boutique hotel, with sharp styling in shades of chocolate and cream with splashes of red. Just across the street from the train station.

## Cathays Area

**Cardiff Youth Hostel** (YHA; Map p86; % 0870 770 5750; 2 Wedal Rd, Roath Park; dm £18; p j ) A spacious, modern red-brick hostel 2 miles north of the city centre, this place has a large, well-equipped kitchen and also has secure cycle storage. Take buses 28, 29 or 29B from the bus station.

**Cardiff University** (Map p86; % 2087 4702; www.cardiff.ac.uk/resid; Southgate House, Bevan Pl; s from £22)

Single caravans with en suite in the Talybont Halls of Residence, 1.5 miles north of the city centre, are available from June to September on a B&B or self-catering basis.

## Cathedral Road Area

Long, leafy Cathedral Rd is lined with loads of midrange accommodation, nearly all of it in restored Victorian town houses – wander along and take your pick.

## BUDGET

**Cardiff Caravan Park** (Map p94; % 2039 8362; Pontcanna Fields, off Cathedral Rd; sites per person £4.25, per car £2.70) This is an excellent camp site – a peaceful spot surrounded by wooded parkland but only a short walk from the city centre. Bicycle hire available on-site.

**Welsh Institute for Sport** (Map p94; % 2030 0500; www.welsh-institute-sport.co.uk; Sophia Gardens; s/d from £27/54) Just off Cathedral Rd, this institute offers plain but functional rooms, some of them equipped for wheelchair users; guests can use the pool and fitness room for free. It gets booked out for big weekend sports events, so call ahead.

## MIDRANGE

**Preste Gaarden Hotel** (Map p94; % 2022 8607; www.cosycardiffhotel.co.uk; 181 Cathedral Rd; s/d £35/55) Expect a friendly welcome at this Victorian B&B, which offers good value despite some rooms (especially the bathrooms) being a bit cramped. There are cheaper rooms with shared bathrooms.

**Town House** (Map p94; % 2023 9399; www.thetownhousecardiff.co.uk; 70 Cathedral Rd; s/d from £45/63; p ) Yet another elegant Victorian town house with a welcoming owner, the Town House retains lots of period features, including mosaic-tiled hallway, original fireplaces and stained glass, though the décor in the bedrooms is a bit on the flowery side.

**Beaufort Guest House** (Map p94; % 2023 7003; www.beauforthousecardiff.co.uk; 65 Cathedral Rd; s/d from £49/65; p ) The Beaufort has a plush, upmarket feel, and despite having had a thorough refurbishment it retains a Victorian atmosphere with period-style furniture, gilt mirrors, heavy drapes and even the odd portrait of Queen Vic herself.

**Churchill Hotel** (Map p94; % 2040 1300; www.churchillshotel.co.uk; Cardiff Rd; s/d from £65/75; p ) A stylish town-house hotel on the edge of Llandaff Fields, the Churchill offers bright, modern bedrooms in the main building plus attractive suites with separate lounges in the adjoining mews cottages.

**Saco House** (Map p94; % 0845 122 0405; www.sacoapartments.co.uk; 74-76 Cathedral Rd; 1-/2-bedroom apt £123/153; p ) This Victorian town house has been given a stylish contemporary makeover and converted into serviced apartments, complete with comfortable lounges and fitted kitchens. The two-bedroom apartments are good value for families with kids and there's an extra sofa bed in the lounge.

## Cardiff Bay

There's not much in the way of budget accommodation in Cardiff's shiny new waterfront development.

**Jolyons Hotel** (Map p89; % 2048 8775; www.jolyons.co.uk; 5 Bute Cres; d £85-195) A touch of Georgian elegance in the heart of Cardiff Bay, Jolyons is a small boutique hotel with six individually designed rooms combining antique furniture with contemporary colours and chic lighting. There are slate tiles in the stylish bathrooms (one with a whirlpool bath), crisp cotton sheets on the luxurious beds and a snug lounge bar with leather sofas and log-burning stove.

**St David's Hotel & Spa** (Map p89; % 2045 4045; www.thestdavidshotel.com; Havannah St; d £260, ste £290-550; p j ) A glittering, glassy tower topped with a sail-like flourish, St David's has become Cardiff Bay's signature skyline, a Sydney Opera House on the Taff. Expect five-star luxury – every room has a private balcony with harbour view – smart, understated style, and attentive service. The hotel's marine spa offers a range of therapies, as well as a pool, sauna and fitness rooms.

## EATING

The Cardiff restaurant scene is booming, whether you'd like a bacon butty (bacon sandwich) or a bed of rocket.

If all you're after is some inexpensive fast food, look no further than the burger triangle of Mill Lane, Caroline St and St Mary St, the main refuelling centre for Saturday night clubbers, or City Rd in the student quarter northeast of the city centre, a mile-long strip of kebab and curry heaven.

## City Centre

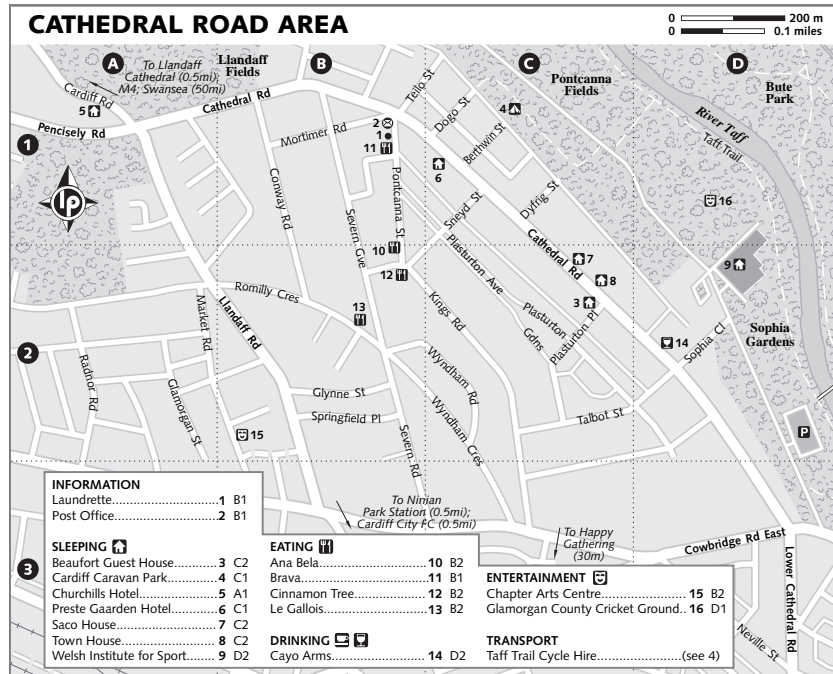
### BUDGET

**Cornish Bakehouse** (Map p86; % 2066 5041; 11 Church St; snacks £1.50-4; h 9am-6pm Mon-Sat, 10.30am-5pm Sun) This bakery conjures up every imaginable variety of Cornish pasty, from traditional steak, potato and onion, to cheese and bacon or lamb and mint, as well as muffins and coffee, which you can eat standing up or take away.

**New York Deli** (Map p86; % 2038 8388; 20 High St Arcade; mains £2-4; h 9am-5pm Mon-Sat) This tiny wood-panelled café serves up giant, US-style sandwiches – one between two is enough for most mortals – stacked bagels and big mugs of coffee. There's a good breakfast menu too, but get in early as there are only a couple of tables.

**Vegetarian Food Studio** (Map p83; % 2023 8222; 109 Penarth Rd; mains £3-5; h 10am-9.30pm Tue & Wed, 10am-10pm Thu-Sun) This is an unassuming café and takeaway south of the city centre, which has earned a reputation for serving the tastiest and most authentic Gujarati vegetarian cuisine in the city.

**Madame Fromage** (Map p86; % 2064 4888; 18 Castle Arcade, High St; mains £3-6; h 9am-5pm Mon-Sat) One of Cardiff's finest delicatessens, with a wide range of charcuterie and French and Welsh cheeses, Madame also has a café with tables in the arcade, serving tasty platters of cheese with bread and salad, all kinds of sandwiches, and excellent coffee.





**Café Minuet** (Map p86; % 2034 1794; 42 Castle Arcade, High St; mains £4-6; 11 10am-5pm Mon-Sat) Don't be fooled by the bare floorboards, folding chairs and paper tablecloths – this unassuming café produces some of the best Italian food in town. The menu includes several good vegetarian dishes, such as *stracciatella alla Romana* (a light soup of vegetable stock with pasta, beaten egg and parmesan, served with garlic bread) and deep-fried mushrooms stuffed with spinach and cheese.

**Cardiff Central Market** (Map p86; % 2087 1214; St Mary St; 11 8am-5.30pm Mon-Sat) The city's handsome Victorian covered market is the place to stock up with picnic goodies such as fresh bread, cheese, cold meats, barbecued chicken, cakes and pastries.

#### MIDRANGE

**Ask** (Map p86; % 2034 4665; 24-32 Wyndham Arcade, Mill Lane; mains £6-8) We don't normally bother recommending chain restaurants, but this Italian pizza and pasta joint really stands out as a good-value, family-friendly place with really tasty food, where the kids are made just as welcome as the adults.

**Bali** (Map p86; % 2037 4700; 30-32 Caroline St; mains £6-9) Smiling waiters, low lighting and crisp linen napkins make for a warm and inviting atmosphere at this Southeast Asian restaurant. The menu gets your mouth watering with a list of Malay, Singapore and Indonesian classics such as satay, laksa, sambal, rendang and nasi goreng, and the kitchen does not disappoint, turning out authentically fragrant and spicy dishes.

**Riverside Cantonese** (Map p86; % 2037 2163; 44 Tudor St; mains £7-10; 11 noon-11.30pm Mon-Sat, noon-10.30pm Sun) A stylish Chinese restaurant that eschews the traditional red and gold décor and paper lanterns for a more modern blonde-wood, apricot and green colour scheme, the Riverside is well known for its authentic Cantonese cuisine, including classic dishes such as salt-and-pepper prawns. There's also a dim-sum menu (served noon to 5pm).

**Thai House Restaurant** (Map p86; % 2038 7404; 3-5 Guildford Cres; mains £8-12; 11 closed Sun) Wales' oldest Thai restaurant has been around for more than 20 years and is still winning awards. Warm yellow walls, polished wood and candle light make for an intimate atmosphere, and the Thai chefs certainly know their stuff, using fresh ingredients flown in from Bangkok every week.

**Juboraj II** (Map p86; % 2037 7668; 10 Mill Lane; mains £8-12; 11 closed Mon) No flock wallpaper or Bolly-

wood soundtrack here – Juboraj sports a stylish, modern brasserie look and serves a selection of classic north Indian and Bangladeshi dishes; try the tandoori trout, crisp outside, spicy and succulent within, or the duck karahi, cooked with peppers, onions, tomatoes and spices.

**Champers** (Map p86; % 2037 2164; 61-62 St Mary St; tapas £3-4, mains £10-16; 11 noon-2.30pm & 7pm-midnight Mon-Sat, 7pm-midnight Sun) This relaxed Spanish wine bar has Andalucian-style wooden furniture set on a sawdust-scattered floor, lots of basket-work lampshades and low ceiling beams. Order a bottle of Rioja, then choose fish or meat from the counter to be cooked as you like, a plate of Serrano ham sliced from the bone or a selection from the tapas menu.

**Zushi** (Map p86; % 2066 9911; The Aspect, 140 Queen St; sushi portions £1.50-3.50; 11 noon-10pm Mon-Sat, noon-5pm Sun) Popularised by local celebs (it's a favourite of Welsh rugby international Gavin Henson and girlfriend Charlotte Church), this is a desperately trendy sushi bar complete with colour-coded dishes on conveyor belts. OK, it ain't exactly Nobu, but the sushi is fresh and prettily prepared, and won't break the bank.

#### TOP END

**Da Venditto** (Map p86; % 2023 0781; 7-8 Park Pl; mains £11-20; 11 closed Sun) Polished-wood floors, white linen tablecloths and blue napkins help create a formal, elegant setting for a menu of modern Italian cuisine, with offerings such as platters of smoked fish with lemon vinaigrette, crab and laver-bread risotto, linguini with lobster, and fillet steak with a white wine, cream and parmesan sauce.

#### Cathays

**Armless Dragon Restaurant** (Map p86; % 2038 2357; 97 Wyeveer Rd, Cathays; mains £11-18; 11 closed Sat lunch, Sun & Mon) One of Cardiff's first foodie restaurants and still one of the best, the Dragon pretty much created what is now called 'modern Welsh cuisine' – that is, taking the finest Welsh produce and traditional Welsh recipes and giving them a contemporary gourmet twist.

**Greenhouse Café** (Map p83; % 2023 5731; 38 Woodville Rd; 1-/2-/3-course menu £10/15/18; 11 closed Sun & Mon) A quirky little place with bare floorboards and mauve walls, this restaurant cooks up imaginative and adventurous vegetarian and vegan dishes accompanied by an excellent wine list.

#### AUTHOR'S CHOICE

**Le Gallois** (Map p94; % 2034 1264; 6-10 Romilly Cres, Canton; mains £17-26; 11 closed Sun) The name says it all – Le Gallois is French for 'the Welshman', and the Welsh owner-chef Padrig Jones has made his name by giving a Continental twist to the best of Welsh produce. An unfussy dining room of pale cream walls, polished-walnut tables and starched-linen napkins makes sure the focus is on the food – the menu of half-a-dozen starters and half-a-dozen main courses changes with the seasons, but signature dishes include confit of rabbit with roast langoustine, tomato and basil risotto, and roast monkfish and crispy noodles with claret sauce and Asian pesto. This is the place for a very special dinner or, if you want to sample some very special cooking without breaking the bank, an extremely good-value set lunch.

#### Cathedral Road Area

**Happy Gathering** (Map p94; % 2039 7531; 233 Corbridge Rd E; mains £6-12; 11 noon-10.45pm Mon-Thu, noon-11.45pm Fri & Sat, noon-9pm Sun) It's always a sign of a good Chinese restaurant when you see the local Chinese community eating there, and you'll see them in force at this popular, long-established place (it's been around for more than 30 years). Noisy, good-natured atmosphere, good service, and kids are made welcome.

**Brava** (Map p94; % 2037 1929; 71 Pontcanna St; mains £8-12; 11 9am-3.45pm Mon, 9am-9pm Tue-Sat, 10am-3.45pm Sun) A cool café decorated with modern prints by local artists, with tables spilling onto the pavement in summer, Brava not only serves great coffee and wine, but also has a menu of bistro favourites, from risotto or steak sandwiches to stir-fried noodles.

**Cinnamon Tree** (Map p94; % 2037 4433; 173 Kings Rd; mains £7-13) A cut above your usual curry house, the Cinnamon Tree has stylish, modern décor and a menu of specialities that includes unusual dishes such as *tharav sofyani* (duck seasoned with chilli, coriander and fenugreek in a thick, spicy sauce) and *hiran champan* (venison cooked with roast garlic cloves, onion and coriander seeds).

**Ana Bela** (Map p94; % 2023 9393; 5 Pontcanna St; mains £15-21; 11 noon-1.45pm & 7-9pm) This is a good place for a romantic dinner – chic but laid-back, with low light and candles, art on the walls and cool tunes – provided you don't mind putting your hand in your pocket. Prices are steep, but the food is superb. Try seared salmon fillet with puy lentils and bacon in a red-wine jus, roast loin of lamb with roasted red-pepper chutney. There's excellent house wine at just £12 a bottle.

#### Cardiff Bay

**Norwegian Church** (Map p89; % 2045 4899; Harbour Dr; mains £3-6) Housed in a whitewashed wooden

church that now houses an arts centre, this is a homely little café with a view of the harbour, serving excellent cakes, waffles, sandwiches and light lunches.

**Buff's Restaurant** (Map p89; % 2046 4628; www.buffsrestaurant.co.uk; 8 Mount Stuart Sq; mains £4.75-13; 11 noon-11pm) Hidden away from the crowds on the waterfront, this is a snug wine bar and restaurant that's popular with local business people, serving straightforward but well-prepared dishes such as crab cakes, fillet steak and roast lamb.

**Caribbean Restaurant** (Map p89; % 2025 2102; 14 West Bute St; mains £7-9) Decorated in sunny Caribbean colours, this is a small, no-frills, family-run restaurant that dishes up hearty Caribbean home cooking. Service can be slow, but that's all part of the charm – you can natter away over a couple of cans of Red Stripe before tucking into a plate of jerk chicken or saltfish with a bowl of rice-and-peas.

**Ba Orient** (Map p89; % 2046 3939; 27 Mermaid Quay; set lunch £9, mains £8-11; 11 food served noon-3pm & 6-11pm Mon-Fri, 1-10pm Sat & Sun) One of the hottest spots at Cardiff Bay, this sophisticated cocktail and dim-sum bar cultivates an oriental atmosphere with low tables, carved wooden benches and Japanese tatami mats. The dim sum is both delicious and beautifully presented, and there are larger dishes such as aromatic crispy duck, plus an accomplished cocktail menu to explore.

**Bosphorus** (Map p89; % 2048 7477; Mermaid Quay; mains £10-14) Sitting out over the water on its own private pier, this Turkish restaurant enjoys good views all round; the best of all are from the outdoor tables at the far end of the jetty. The food is as far removed from the humble kebab as Cardiff is from Istanbul, based on imperial Ottoman cuisine – succulent *pilic guvec* (chicken casserole), charcoal-grilled lamb, and crisp scallop and bacon shashlik.

**Scallops** (Map p89; % 2049 7495; 2 Mermaid Quay; mains £11-17; 11 noon-3pm & 7-10.30pm) No surprise that pride of place on the menu here goes to fresh seafood – from seared scallops with pea and mint purée to full-on lobster thermidor. The brightly decorated dining room is complemented by an attractive al fresco terrace with a view of the bay.

**Woods Bar & Brasserie** (Map p89; % 2049 2400; Stuart St; mains £11-17; 11 closed Sun dinner) Housed in the historic Pilotage Building, but given a minimalist, modern makeover inside, Woods is frequented by politicians from the nearby Welsh Assembly. The cuisine is modern European, light and flavoursome, with dishes such as roast fillet of red snapper with tomato and basil sauce, and vegetarian lasagne with hazelnut pesto.

## DRINKING

Cardiff is a legendary boozing town, and right up there with Dublin and Prague when it comes to hen and stag parties – most Friday and Saturday nights see the city centre invaded by hordes of beered-up lads dressed in ladies' underwear, and sparkly stetsoned, stilettoed ladettes tottering from club to karaoke bar to kebab shop. Wednesdays are student nights, with cheap drink promos prompting a wave of midweek overindulgence.

The main pub-crawl area is the triangle formed by Mill Lane, Caroline St and St Mary St (tacky is a word that comes in handy here – it covers the décor, the music and the feel of the floors underfoot) but away from here Cardiff offers plenty of appealing places to drink, from traditional Edwardian pubs to stylish designer bars.

Don't forget to try the local Brains SA (meaning Special Ale, Same Again or Skull Attack depending on how many you've had), brewed by the same family concern since 1713.

## City Centre

**Goat Major** (Map p86; % 2033 7161; 33 High St) Solidly traditional, with armchairs, a fireplace, and lip-smacking Brains Dark real ale on tap, the Goat Major (ask the bar staff about the name) is an oasis of old-fashioned calm amid the noise and bustle of trendy city-centre bars.

**Cantaloo** (Map p86; % 2037 7014; 23 Greyfriars Rd) Set in a lovely old red-brick building, Cantaloo is a terminally hip designer lounge bar, with lots of polished wood and leather sofas, an extensive cocktail menu and a Havana

cigar bar. There's also a nice outdoor terrace for summer-evening drinks.

**Yard** (Map p86; % 2022 7577; 42-43 St Mary St) Occupying the site of an 18th-century brewery, Yard sports an industrial-chic décor of stainless steel, polished copper pipes and zinc ducting, with a trad-looking bar in front and clubby sofas in back. Outdoor tables, good food and a child-friendly policy pulls in families at lunchtime, while cocktails and DJs attract a young party crowd at night.

**Bar Cuba** (Map p86; % 2039 7967; The Friary) A colourful Cuban-themed bar, where you can lounge on the big sofas and sip a San Miguel or Cuba libre (happy hour from 7pm Friday) before heading to the dance floor to show off your red-hot Latin moves (if they're not so hot, there are salsa classes at 8.30pm on Tuesday).

**Tafarn @ NosDa** (Map p86; % 2037 8866; 53-59 Despenser St) A cool little bar attached to an up-market backpacker hostel (see p93), Tafarn has outdoor tables on a riverside terrace, a big screen for watching all the rugby action and an all-day menu of tasty Welsh snacks.

**Cottage** (Map p86; % 2023 8228; 25 St Mary St) A long, narrow pub with a traditional atmosphere – wooden floor, brass drip trays, polished mahogany bar – the Cottage attracts a mix of characters, from weary shoppers to local office workers, and offers guest real ales as an alternative to the ubiquitous Brains.

**City Arms** (Map p86; % 2022 5258; Quay St) A friendly, unpretentious, old-fashioned pub with a classics-crammed jukebox, the City Arms is predictably packed out on rugby weekends (the Millennium Stadium is right across the road), but offers a pleasant place for a quiet pint on weekday afternoons.

## Cathedral Road Area

**Cayo Arms** (Map p94; % 2039 1910; 36 Cathedral Rd) This is a real-ale pub with warm atmosphere and a loyal band of regulars. It serves a fine range of Tomos Watkins real ales, plus guest beers such as Old Speckled Hen, and is filled to bursting on match days.

## Cardiff Bay

**Salt** (Map p89; % 2049 4375; Mermaid Quay) A huge, modern, nautical-themed bar (ocean-liner décor, blue-and-white drapes, bits of driftwood, pictures of the Welsh coast) with plenty of sofas and armchairs for lounging around and, best of all, a 1st-floor open-air terrace with a view of the yachts out in the bay.

**Eli Jenkins** (Map p89; % 2044 0921; 7-8 Bute Cres) Named after the vicar in Dylan Thomas' *Under Milk Wood*, this is a trad-style pub set in a Victorian terrace, with wood-panelling, bookcases and a big screen for the rugby. It's a popular spot for an after-show drink for performers at the Wales Millennium Centre across the square.

**Bute Dock Hotel** (Map p89; % 2065 1426; W Bute St) Originally a Victorian coaching inn, the Bute Dock is a proper local pub, a welcome antidote to the trendy bars of Mermaid Quay. Open-mic sessions on Friday nights keep the pub-singer tradition alive, with amateurs belting out renditions of Tom Jones classic hits.

**Wharf** (Map p83; % 2040 5092; 121 Schooner Way) A huge glass-and-brick building with a Victorian-industrial look, the Wharf is a big family-friendly pub with a children's area and picnic tables overlooking the water. There's regular entertainment, with live music Monday and Saturday, and stand-up comedy on Thursday.

## GAY & LESBIAN CARDIFF

Cardiff has a relaxed and thriving gay and lesbian scene, with most clubs and bars centred around Charles St – for listings and general information check [www.gaywales.co.uk](http://www.gaywales.co.uk).

The big event is the annual **Mardi Gras festival**, held in late August or early September (see p93) – the local clubs run special nights over this weekend too.

### Pubs, Clubs & Saunas

**Bar Icon** (Map p86; % 2034 4300; 60 Charles St) A newcomer on the scene, Icon is an ultrastylish cocktail bar decked out in designer shades of olive green and chocolate brown, with comfy sofas and laid-back tunes; it pulls in a mixed crowd of gay and straight, male and female, young and old.

**Golden Cross** (Map p86; % 2039 4556; [www.thegolden.co.uk](http://www.thegolden.co.uk); 283 Hayes Bridge Rd) One of the oldest pubs in the city and a long-standing gay venue, this Victorian bar retains its handsome stained glass, polished wood and ceramic tiles. A daytime atmosphere of relaxed local drinking den escalates into full-on party mode in the evenings, with a crowded programme of drag, cabaret, quiz and karaoke nights.

**Kings Cross** (Map p86; % 2064 9890; [www.kxcardiff.co.uk](http://www.kxcardiff.co.uk); 25 Caroline St) Prominently positioned at one end of Cardiff's café quarter, the recently tarted-up KX (as its known) is a stalwart of the gay scene, with cabaret on Wednesday, DJs on Friday and Saturday, and karaoke on Sunday.

**Club X** (Map p86; % 2025 8838; [www.club-x-cardiff.co.uk](http://www.club-x-cardiff.co.uk); 35 Charles St; admission £5; 11 10pm-3am Wed, 9pm-4am Fri, 9pm-6am Sat) Cardiff's biggest gay club has two dance floors, with a great chill-out bar and covered beer garden upstairs. Wednesday night is student night, with cheap drinks, but Saturday is the big one, with chart hits out front and dirty house in the back room. It's also open on the last Sunday of the month (11.30pm to 4am).

**Exit Bar** (Map p86; % 2064 0102; [www.exitcardiff.com](http://www.exitcardiff.com); 48 Charles St) A friendly, attitude-free bar with DJs filling the two dance floors and retro disco hits and dance music every night of the week till 2am or 3am. The Exit is another popular, long-standing gay venue.

**Locker Room** (Map p86; % 2022 0388; [www.lockerroomcardiff.co.uk](http://www.lockerroomcardiff.co.uk); 50 Charles St; admission £11; 11 noon-11pm Mon-Fri, nonstop noon Sat-10pm Sun) Gay men's health club and sauna.

## ENTERTAINMENT

Cardiff's club scene is hardly going to set the night on fire, but there's plenty to explore, especially if you're into the alternative side of things, and there's no shortage of decent live-music venues. The sporting calendar is a busy one, offering everything from county cricket to international rugby, while culture vultures can choose between the Welsh National Opera at the Millennium Centre, or the Welsh Proms at St David's Hall. **Buzz** is a free monthly magazine with up-to-date entertainment listings in the city, available from the tourist office and entertainment venues.

## Cinemas

**Chapter Arts Centre** (Map p94; % 2030 4400; [www.chapter.org](http://www.chapter.org); Market Rd, Canton) The city's main arts centre has a full and varied programme of arthouse cinema.

**Vue** (Map p86; % 08712 240 240; [www.myvue.com](http://www.myvue.com); Millennium Plaza, Wood St) Huge 14-screen multiplex.

**Cineworld** (Map p86; % 0871 200 2000; www.ugc.cinememas.co.uk; Mary Ann St) An even huger 15-screen multiplex.

## Clubs

**Clwb Ifor Bach** (Map p86; % 2023 2199; www.clwb.net; 11 Womanby St) Also known as 'the Welsh club' (or just Y Clwb in Welsh), this is Cardiff's longest-standing and most eclectic nightclub, with three dance floors promoting a range of club nights, from the hard rock, metal and goth of Tuesday's Planet Rock to Saturday night's Clwb Cariad, dedicated to classic Welsh-language rock and pop.

**Chilli's** (Map p86; % 2064 1010; 3 Churchill Way) Formerly the University of Wales student union, Chilli's is a stylish chill-out bar and terrace with two dance floors. It's popular with students on weeknights, but pulls in a mixed crowd at weekends when they have Lamerica (www.lamericapromotions.com), a brilliant soulful/funky house night.

**Coal Exchange** (Map p89; % 2049 4917; www.coal.exchange.co.uk; Mount Stuart Sq, Butetown) Butetown's historic exchange building is a regular venue for Cool House (www.cool-house.co.uk), Cardiff's most famous house-music night, with top UK and international DJs attracting clubbers from as far afield as London and Manchester.

**Toucan Club** (Map p83; % 2049 1061; www.toucanclub.co.uk; 95 Newport Rd) This funky little space, all bold colours and swirly mosaics, is the centre of Cardiff's independent club scene, promoting funk, world music and cutting-edge hip hop, as well as exploring new beats and staging live dance acts, acoustic acts and performance poets. Well worth a look.

**Wish Club** (Map p86; % 2022 6600; www.wishclub.co.uk; 5-9 Church St) Wish is the place where all those hen nights are headed – cool dance floor, glamorous dress code, massive sound system, and a string of top-name touring DJs (think Goldie, Axwell, Tidy Boys, Seb Fontaine, X-press2, Layo and Bushwacker).

## Classical Music, Opera & Ballet

Occasional classical music concerts are held in Cardiff Castle, Llandaff Cathedral and St John's Church.

**St David's Hall** (Map p86; % 2087 8444; www.stdavids.hallcardiff.co.uk; The Hayes) The National Concert Hall of Wales, this is the main venue for performances by the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, and home of the Welsh Proms (www.welsh

proms.co.uk), a 10-day series of concerts held in July.

**Wales Millennium Centre** (Map p89; % 2040 2000; www.wmc.org.uk; Bute Pl, Cardiff Bay) Cardiff's biggest venue provides a permanent home for the Welsh National Opera, as well as several dance and drama companies.

## Live Rock, Pop & Jazz

Major musicals and pop concerts are staged at the **Cardiff International Arena** (Map p86; % 2022 4488; www.cclive.co.uk/cia; Mary Ann St) or, if they're really huge, at the **Millennium Stadium** (see p88).

**Clwb Ifor Bach** (Map p86; % 2023 2199; www.clwb.net; 11 Womanby St) Founded in the early 1980s, this is Cardiff's most famous live-music venue, and the best place to catch gigs by up-and-coming new bands.

**Barfly** (Map p86; % 0870 907 0999; www.barflyclub.com; Kingsway) Part of a UK-wide chain of music clubs, the Cardiff Barfly is a major live-music venue with gigs six nights a week, providing a stage for local talent as well as major bands on tour.

**Cardiff University Students' Union** (Map p86; % 2078 1458; www.cardiffstudents.com; Park Pl, Cathays) The students' union hosts regular live gigs by big-name bands, from Newport rappers Goldie Lookin Chain and chart-toppers the Magic Numbers to ageing heavy-metal rockers Motörhead. The box office is on the second floor of the union building and is open noon till midnight.

**Point** (Map p89; % 2046 0873; www.thepointcardiffbay.com; Mount Stuart Sq, Butetown) Set in a beautifully converted Victorian church, the Point has hosted gigs by a wide range of bands since opening in 2003, including the Stereophonics, Super Furry Animals and the Darkness. It's now one of the city's best live-rock and metal venues, with gigs several nights a week.

**Café Jazz** (Map p86; % 2038 7026; www.cafejazzcardiff.com; Sandringham Hotel, 21 St Mary St) It's not exactly your traditional smoky jazz basement, but this appealing hotel café-bar is the city's main jazz venue, with live jazz kicking off at 9pm Monday to Thursday, and blues from 10pm Friday (on Saturday nights it's a piano bar). Monday-night jam sessions give new talent a chance to sit in with the house band.

## Theatre

**Chapter Arts Centre** (Map p94; % 2030 4400; www.chapter.org; Market Rd, Canton) Probably the city's most interesting arts venue, the Chapter has a varied programme of contemporary drama, as well as

art exhibitions, workshops, alternative theatre and dance performances; it's also an appealing, arty place to hang out and there's a good café-bar with Cardiff's biggest range of beers.

**Sherman Theatre** (Map p86; % 2064 6900; www.shermantheatre.co.uk; Senghennydd Rd, Cathays) The Sherman is home to South Wales' leading theatre company and stages a wide range of material from classics and children's theatre to works by new playwrights.

**New Theatre** (Map p86; % 2087 8889; www.newtheatre.cardiff.co.uk; Park Pl) This restored Edwardian playhouse – Anna Pavlova and Sarah Bernhardt are among those who have trod the boards here – hosts various touring productions, including big West End and Broadway shows, musicals and pantomime.

## Comedy

**Jongleurs** (Map p86; % 0870 787 0707; www.jongleurs.com; Millennium Plaza, Wood St) This well-established comedy chain stages regular stand-up shows on Friday and Saturday nights, with a trademark mix of well-known names, regulars and raw newcomers.

**Glee Club** (Map p89; % 0870 241 5093; www.glee.co.uk; Mermaid Quay, Cardiff Bay) The Glee Club is another comedy chain providing a similar mix of acts.

## Sport

If you stand in Bute Park on certain Saturday afternoons you can hear the crowds roaring at three different sports grounds.

**Millennium Stadium** (Map p86; % 2023 1495; www.millenniumstadium.com; Westgate St) All national and international rugby and football matches take place at this stadium. Tickets for international fixtures are difficult for mere mortals to get hold of; national matches are easier. Football matches here are family affairs, with no drinking allowed inside during the match.

**Cardiff Arms Park** (Map p86; % 0870 013 5213; www.cardiffcfc.com; Westgate St) Just north of the Millennium Stadium, this is the home ground of the Cardiff Rugby Football Club, founded in 1876. Rugby union is this city's favourite sport, and the Cardiff Blues are Wales' richest, most star-studded club, having fed over 200 players into the national team.

**Ninian Park** (% 0845 345 1400; www.cardiffcityfc.co.uk; Sloper Rd) A mile west of the centre is the home of Cardiff City Football Club. Fans still hark back to 1927 when the Bluebirds took the English FA Cup out of England for the first (and only) time – Welsh football's

equivalent of Owain Glyndŵr's rebellion. Take Cardiff bus 1 from the central bus station, or a Pontypridd-bound train to Ninian Park train station.

**Glamorgan County Cricket Ground** (Map p94; % 2040 9380; www.glamorgancricket.com; Sophia Gardens) This is the home to Glamorgan County Cricket Club, the only Welsh club belonging to the England and Wales Cricket Board. At the time of writing it was undergoing redevelopment.

The city's newest sports team – founded in 1986 – is the premier-league ice-hockey club, the **Cardiff Devils** (% 0845 434 9055; www.thecardiffdevils.com). At the time of writing, the club was homeless following the closure of the Welsh National Ice Rink.

## SHOPPING

Cardiff is a major shopping city and has all the usual high-street names ranged along Queen St, the main commercial drag, and in the big city-centre malls. The Capitol Shopping Centre is at the east end of Queen St (housing the Virgin Megastore, Fat Face, Karen Millen) and the St David's Centre is between Queen St and Hill St (Debenhams, Marks & Spencer, Topshop). The shopping mall at Cardiff Bay, Mermaid Quay, at present has more bars and restaurants than shops.

Note that most of Cardiff's city centre, from Queen St south to Bute Tce, is slated for a major redevelopment that will create the biggest shopping centre in the UK – St David's 2 – scheduled to open in 2009.

Cardiff's most distinctive shopping feature is the High St Arcades, a series of glass-roofed Victorian and Edwardian arcades running off High St and St Mary St, lined with quirky fashion boutiques, speciality shops and cafés.

**High St Arcade** (Map p86; High St & St John St) This arcade abounds with fashion boutiques, shoe shops, nail salons and gift shops – check out cool shoes and bags at Buzz & Co, funky women's fashion and sparkly accessories at Pussy Galore, and smart, streetwise clothes at Road. Hobo's is great for secondhand 1960s and '70s clothing.

**Spillers Records** (Map p86; % 2022 4905; www.spillersrecords.co.uk; 36 The Hayes) The world's oldest record shop, founded in 1894 (when it sold wax phonograph cylinders) and still occupying its original premises, Spiller's is a national treasure. It stocks a huge range of CDs and vinyl, prides itself on catering to the nonmainstream

end of the music market (it's especially good on punk), and promotes local talent through regular in-store gigs.

**Cardiff Antiques Centre** (Map p86; % 2039 8891; 10-12 Royal Arcade, St Mary St & The Hayes; 10am-5.30pm Mon-Sat) Spread over three floors of an Edwardian arcade, this centre has more than a dozen little stores selling Welsh porcelain and china, antique jewellery and silver, stamps, coins and collectables.

**Castle Welsh Crafts** (Map p86; % 2034 3038; 1 Castle St) If you're after stuffed dragons, lovespoons, Cardiff T-shirts or a suit of armour (£2000 and wearable, if you're interested), this is the city's biggest souvenir shop, conveniently located across the street from the castle.

**Craft in the Bay** (Map p89; % 2048 4611; 57 Bute St, Cardiff Bay; 10.30am-5.30pm daily) This retail gallery showcases work created by contemporary Welsh artists and craftspeople, with a wide range of ceramics, textiles, woodwork, jewellery, glassware, paper, baskets, bookbinding and ironwork.

**Jacob's Market** (Map p86; % 2039 0939; W Canal Wharf; 9am-5.30pm daily) A four-floor red-brick building housing more than 50 stalls, Jacob's sells secondhand and antique furniture, vintage clothes, books, military memorabilia and bric-a-brac.

## Markets

For a spot of old-fashioned shopping, head for **Cardiff Central Market** (Map p86; entrances on St Mary St & Trinity St; 8am-5.30pm Mon-Sat), which is packed with stalls selling everything from fresh fish to mobile phones, or go across the Taff to the **Riverside Real Food Market** (Map p86; Fitzhamon Embankment; 10am-2pm Sun) for fresh local produce and organic food.

## GETTING THERE & AWAY

### Air

**Cardiff airport** (% 01446-711111; www.cwflly.com) is 12 miles southwest of the centre, near the suburb

of Barry. On most days there are direct flights to Cardiff from destinations around the UK and continental Europe; see p320.

### Bus

All local and regional bus and coach companies use Cardiff Central bus station on Wood St, right next to Cardiff Central train station. For information on local and national bus timetables and fares, contact **Traveline** (% 0870 608 2 608; www.traveline-cymru.org.uk).

The main intercity bus operators out of Cardiff are:

**First Cymru** (www.firstgroup.com) Swansea shuttle.

**National Express** (www.nationalexpress.com) Swansea, Newport, Chepstow, Bristol, London Heathrow, London Gatwick.

**Stagecoach** (www.stagecoachbus.com) South Wales Valleys, Merthyr Tydfil, Abergavenny.

Direct bus services from Cardiff (showing approximate one-way fares) are shown in the table below. The Beacons Bus connects Cardiff with various destinations in the Brecon Beacons National Park.

For details of buses to Cardiff from London and the rest of the UK, see p323.

### Car & Motorcycle

The fastest access to Cardiff city centre from the M4 is via the A48 (Eastern Ave) from junction 29 or 30 or, from Swansea, the A470 (Northern Ave) from junction 32. The A4232 (Grangetown and Butetown Link) from junction 33 provides direct access to Cardiff Bay.

Try to avoid arriving in Cardiff, or even driving along the M4 nearby, during rush hours (7.30am to 9.30am and 4.30pm to 6.30pm Monday to Friday).

### Train

The main train station in the city is Cardiff Central, on the southern edge of the city cen-

tre. It is served by direct trains from major UK cities such as London (Paddington), Manchester, Bristol, Birmingham and Nottingham; see p323 for details. Call the **National Rail Enquiry Service** (% 08457 48 49 50; www.nationalrail.co.uk) for timetable information.

**Arriva Trains Wales** (www.arrivatrainswales.co.uk) operate all train services in Wales. For direct services from Cardiff (with one-way fares), see the table below.

Destination	Fare	Duration	Frequency
Abergavenny	£8	40min	hourly
Chepstow	£6	40min	hourly
Haverfordwest	£16	2½hr	2hr
Llanoverly	£12	1½hr	1 daily
Merthyr Tydfil	£4	1hr	hourly
Shrewsbury	£27	2¼hr	hourly
Swansea	£4	1hr	45min

To get from Cardiff to North Wales by train, you will have to change at Shrewsbury.

## GETTING AROUND To/From the Airport

The X91 Airbus Express service (£3.70, 30 minutes, at least hourly) runs from the airport to the central bus station (stand E1).

A free shuttle bus links the airport terminal to nearby Rhoose-Cardiff Airport train station, which has regular trains into the city (£2.80, 35 minutes, hourly).

A taxi from the airport to the city centre takes 20 to 30 minutes, depending on traffic, and costs about £22.

### Bicycle

Cyclists rejoice: Cardiff is one of Britain's flattest cities. The Taff Trail starts here and offers a pleasant route to Castell Coch and other sights. At **Taff Trail Cycle Hire** (Map p94; % 2039 8362; off Cathedral Rd), in Cardiff Caravan Park, bike rental costs £7.25 per three hours and £10.10 per day. It has some bikes adapted for disabled cyclists.

### Bus

City and suburban bus routes are operated by **Cardiff Bus** (Map p86; % 2066 6444; www.cardiffbus.com; St David's House, Wood St); for timetable enquiries call **Traveline** (% 0870 608 2 608). Fares range from 90p to £1.80 depending on distance; buy your ticket from the driver, and have the exact fare ready (no change given).

A free transport map showing bus routes is available from the Cardiff Bus office and the tourist office.

There is a range of travel passes that work out cheaper than a single ticket to some of the destinations they cover. A **Day To Go** ticket (adult £3, child £2) is valid until midnight on the day of purchase, on all buses run by Cardiff Bus in the Cardiff, Penarth and Barry area.

A **Network Day Rider** (adult/child £6/£4) covers destinations as far-flung as Merthyr Tydfil, Blaenavon, Newport, Abergavenny, Plymouth and Chepstow on buses operated by Cardiff Bus, Stagecoach and several other local companies.

Both of the above tickets can be bought from the driver. For full details see the Cardiff Bus website.

### Car & Motorcycle

Parking in the city centre can be a problem. There are convenient car parks at Castle Mews (on North Rd, just north of the castle) and Sophia Gardens (off Cathedral Rd, west of the city centre); charges are around £3 for up to two hours, £6 for up to six hours. There is free, unrestricted, on-street parking further out on Cathedral Rd, about 20 minutes walk from the city centre.

### CAR RENTAL

For car rental try:

**Avis** (% 2034 2111; www.avis.co.uk)

**Budget** (% 2072 7499; www.budget.co.uk)

**Europcar** (% 2049 8978; www.europcar.co.uk)

**Hertz** (% 2022 4548; www.hertz.co.uk)

**National** (% 2049 6256; www.nationalcar.co.uk)

### Taxi

Official black cabs can be hailed in the street, ordered by phone, or picked up at taxi ranks outside the train station, in Duke St opposite the castle, and at the corner of Greyfriars Rd and Park Pl.

Reliable taxi companies include **Capital Cars** (% 2077 7777) and **Dragon Taxis** (% 2033 3333).

## AROUND CARDIFF

One of the great things about Cardiff is the variety of attractions around its outskirts. You can go down to the seaside at Penarth, explore the hulking moat-encircled castle at Caerphilly, or the high-camp, fairy-tale Castell Coch,

### DIRECT BUS SERVICES FROM CARDIFF

Destination	Bus	Fare	Duration	Frequency
Abergavenny	X3	£4	1½hr	hourly
Aberystwyth	X40	£14	4¼hr	hourly
Brecon	X43	£4	1½hr	5 daily
Chepstow	201	£4.50	1hr	2hr
Swansea	100	£4	1hr	45min

wander around the amazing St Fagans National History Museum, or explore the remains of a major Roman army base at Caerleon.

## ST FAGANS NATIONAL HISTORY MUSEUM

From the oldest surviving farmhouse in Wales to a row of miners' cottages from Merthyr Tydfil, historic buildings from all over the country have been dismantled and re-erected in a beautiful rural setting at the **St Fagans National History Museum** (☎ 2057 3500; www.museumwales.ac.uk/en/stfagans; St Fagans; admission free; 10am-5pm). More than 40 buildings are on show, including farmhouses of timber and stone, barns, a watermill, a school and an 18th-century Unitarian chapel, with native breeds of livestock grazing in the surrounding fields.

Highlights of the open-air museum include a farmhouse dating from 1508, redolent with the smells of old timber, beeswax and wood smoke, and a row of six miners' cottages from Merthyr Tydfil, each one restored and furnished to represent different periods in the town's history, from the austere minimalism of 1805 to all the mod cons of 1985.

You can see craftspeople at work in many of the buildings, showing how blankets, clogs, barrels, tools and cider were once made, and the woollen mill sells its own handmade blankets. It's a great place for kids, with a number of special events in the summer.

You'll need at least half a day to do justice to the museum, which also includes indoor exhibitions dedicated to traditional costume,

farming implements and daily life. There's a café-restaurant in the visitors' centre, and summer-only tearooms at two other points.

## Getting There & Away

St Fagans is 4 miles west of Cardiff. Take Cardiff buses 32 or 320 (20 minutes, hourly) to a small gate at St Fagans Castle, 500m from the visitors centre.

By car, take the A4232 south from junction 33 on the M4. From the city centre, head out on Cathedral Rd and continue straight along Pencisely Rd (B4488) and St Fagans Rd. There's a £2.50 charge for parking.

## PENARTH

☎ 029 / pop 24,300

Penarth is a quaint, old-fashioned seaside resort, stuck somewhere between the 19th and 20th centuries, with a bright-blue spindly Victorian pier staggering out to sea, a trim seafront lined with attractive Victorian terraces, and a mature population wielding Thermos flasks. It's a good place to come for a brisk seaside walk, a world away from the bustle of the city, and makes a good half-day excursion.

From Penarth train station or the bus stop at Windsor Arcade in the centre, it's a five-minute walk through Alexandra Gardens down to the esplanade. There's a **tourist office** (☎ 2070 8849; Penarth Pier; 10am-5.30pm Apr-Sep) at the entrance to the pier.

A block east of the train station, the **Turner House Gallery** (☎ 2070 8870; www.ffotogallery.org;

Plymouth Rd; admission free; 11am-5pm Wed-Sun), housed in a red-brick building, has changing art exhibitions, and runs summer workshops where kids can do stuff like print-making and pinhole photography.

At the north end of the town, next to Penarth Marina, is the **Cardiff Bay Barrage** (p90).

From May to October, **Waverley Excursions** (☎ 0845 130 4647; www.waverleyexcursions.co.uk) runs cruises on either the *Waverley*, the world's last seagoing paddle steamer, or its sister ship the *Balmoral*, departing from Penarth pier three or four times weekly for a trip across the Bristol Channel to Holm Island or to Ilfracombe in Devon. You can book by phone, online or at the tourist office; tickets can also be bought on board, or at the Cardiff Bus office in Cardiff.

## Getting There & Away

Penarth is almost a suburb of Cardiff, lying on the south shore of Cardiff Bay. Cardiff buses 89 and 89A (20 minutes, half-hourly Monday to Saturday, hourly Sunday) run to Penarth, and there are frequent trains from Cardiff Central (10 minutes, every 20 minutes).

There's also a Waterbus ferry from Mermaid Quay in Cardiff Bay to the barrage (20 minutes), with departures hourly from 10am to 5pm daily, and also from 6.30pm to 10.30pm on Saturdays.

## CASTELL COCH

Perched atop a thickly wooded crag on the northern fringes of the city is Cardiff Castle's little sister. The fanciful, fairy-tale **Castell Coch** (Cadw; ☎ 2081 0101; Tongwynlais; adult/child £3.50/3; 9.30am-6pm Jun-Sep, 9.30am-5pm Apr, May & Oct, 9.30am-4pm Mon-Sat & 11am-4pm Sun Nov-Mar) was the summer retreat of the third marquess of Bute and, like Cardiff Castle, was designed by William Burges in gaudy Victorian Gothic style, complete with working drawbridge and portcullis.

Raised on the ruins of the first Castell Coch (Red Castle) built by Norman Gilbert de Clare in the 13th century, the Butes' Disneyesque holiday home is a monument to high camp. Lady Bute's huge, circular bedroom is pure fantasy – her bed, with crystal globes on the bedposts, sits in the middle beneath an extravagantly decorated and mirrored cupola, with 28 painted panels around the walls depicting monkeys (fashionable at the time, apparently; just plain weird, now). The corbels are carved with images of birds nesting or feeding their

young, and the washbasin is framed between two castle towers.

Lord Bute's bedroom is small and plain in comparison – the WC isn't even en suite – but the octagonal Drawing Room is another hallucinogenic tour de force, the walls painted with scenes from Aesop's fables, the domed ceiling a flurry of birds and stars, and the fireplace topped with figures depicting the three ages of man.

## Getting There & Away

Cardiff bus 26 (30 minutes, half-hourly Monday to Saturday, hourly Sunday) to Tredegar stops at Tongwynlais, from where it's a 10-minute walk to the castle. The same bus continues to Caerphilly Castle, and the two can be combined in a day trip. Bus 26A (four daily Monday to Friday) stops right at the castle gates.

It's also an easy cycle from Cardiff to Castell Coch along the Taff Trail.

## CAERPHILLY (CAERFFIL)

☎ 029 / pop 31,000

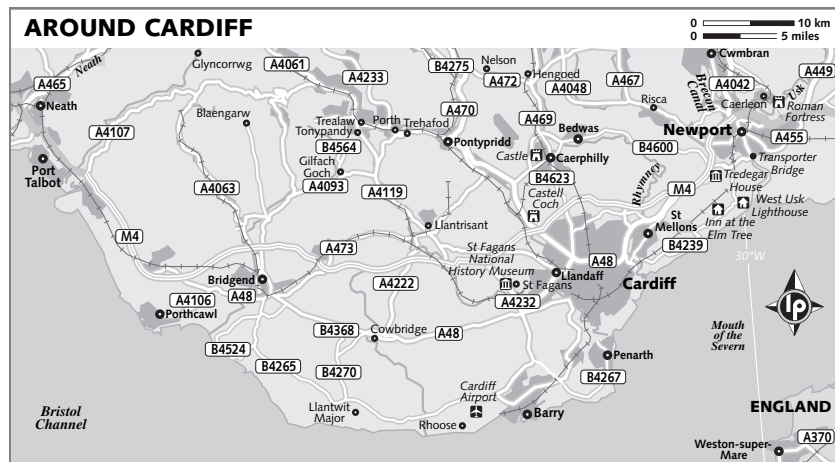
The town of Caerphilly – now almost a suburb of Cardiff – guards the entrance to the Rhymney valley to the north of the capital. Its name is synonymous with a popular variety of hard, slightly crumbly white cheese (similar to cheddar, but saltier) that originated in the surrounding area. It has long been famous for its magnificent castle, and more recently for the quirky Big Cheese festival (see the boxed text, p107).

The **tourist office** (☎ 2088 0011; Twyn Sq; 10am-6pm Apr-Sep, 10am-5pm Oct-Mar) is just east of the castle, itself clearly visible 500m north of Caerphilly train station (along Cardiff Rd).

## Caerphilly Castle

You could be forgiven for thinking that **Caerphilly Castle** (Cadw; ☎ 2088 3143; adult/child £3.50/3; 9.30am-6pm Jun-Sep, 9.30am-5pm Apr-May & Oct, 9.30am-4pm Mon-Sat & 11am-4pm Sun Nov-Mar) – with its profusion of towers and crenellations reflected in a duck-filled lake – was a film set rather than an ancient monument. Indeed, it often *is* used as a film set and makes a spectacular backdrop for the annual Big Cheese festival. But it is also one of Britain's finest examples of a 13th-century fortress with water defences.

Unusually, Caerphilly was never a royal castle. Most of the construction was completed between 1268 and 1271 by the powerful English baron Gilbert de Clare (1243-95), Lord Marcher of Glamorgan, in response to the



threat of Prince Llywelyn ap Gruffydd, prince of Gwynedd (and the last Welsh Prince of Wales). In the 13th century Caerphilly was state-of-the-art, being one of the earliest castles to use lakes, bridges and a series of concentric fortifications for defence; to reach the inner court you had to overcome no fewer than three drawbridges, six portcullises and five sets of double gates.

Edward I's subsequent campaign against the Welsh princes put an end to Llywelyn's ambitions and Caerphilly's short-lived spell on the front line came to an end without ever tasting battle; the famous leaning tower at the southeast corner is a result of subsidence rather than sabotage. In the early 14th century it was remodelled as a grand residence and the magnificent Great Hall was adapted for entertaining, but from the mid-14th century onward the castle began to fall into ruin.

Much of what you see results from restoration from 1928 to 1939 by the fourth marquess of Bute; work continued after the state bought the castle in 1950. The Great Hall was given a magnificent wooden ceiling in the 19th century and the Gothic windows were restored in the 1960s; it is now used to host special events. On the south dam platform you can see reconstructions of medieval siege weapons; they are working models and lob stone projectiles into the lake during battle re-enactments.

## Eating & Drinking

**Glanmor's Tearoom** (☎ 2088 8355; 22 Castle Ct; snacks from £2) Just north of the tourist office and opposite the castle, this is a cheerful old-fashioned tearoom with good homemade meals, fresh pastries and home-baked scones.

**Courthouse** (☎ 2088 8120; Cardiff Rd; mains £4-7) Parts of this atmospheric old pub date from the 14th century. It enjoys a great setting, with a beer garden overlooking the castle, serving basic pub grub and an all-day breakfast.

## Getting There & Away

The easiest way to reach Caerphilly from Cardiff is by train on the Rhymney or Bargoed service (single/return £2.80/4.50, 20 minutes, four per hour Monday to Saturday, every two hours Sunday).

Stagecoach bus 26 (45 minutes, hourly Monday to Saturday, five daily Sunday) goes from Cardiff bus station to Castle St near the tourist office; this is the same bus that goes to Castell Coch, and the two castles make a good day trip.

## NEWPORT (CASNEWYDD)

☎ 01633 / pop 140,000

Hello. My name is Newport, and I'm a bit of a dump. Ah well – they say the first step on the road to recovery is admitting you have a problem, and poor old Newport has been saddled for too long with a reputation for grim urban squalor and an alcoholic, binge-fuelled nightlife. But with the turn of the millennium it has pulled itself together and is determined to clean up its act.

Newly crowned with the title of 'city' in 2002, Newport is shrugging off the air of decline that settled over it in the late 20th century, and has set out on an ambitious programme of regeneration aimed at transforming the city centre from 1970s ugly to 21st-century hi-tech. The face of the city is changing almost daily – the latest additions include the stylish Riverfront Theatre & Art Centre (opened in 2004) and the striking Usk Footbridge (opened in 2006) – as the city gears up to host the Ryder Cup international golf tournament in 2010.

In the meantime, the city centre is still pretty grungy, its streets spotted with chewing gum and spattered with spilt booze and kebab sauce. Nevertheless, Newport offers some intriguing visitor attractions, from spectacular industrial heritage (the elegant Transporter Bridge) to indie music mecca (the legendary TJ's).

## History

The town takes its name from the fact that it was built after the 'old port' at Caerleon, further upstream, following the construction of Newport Castle in Norman times. Like many harbour towns in South Wales, it grew rich on the back of the iron and coal industries in the 19th and early-20th centuries.

In the second half of the 20th century, Newport's shipbuilding industry disappeared, and the docks declined in importance as coal exports shifted to Barry and iron-ore imports to Port Talbot. In 2001 the huge Llanwern steelworks closed down. Today, the city is busy reinventing itself as a centre for the service sector and technology industries.

But the most famous event in Newport's history – perhaps fittingly, considering its present-day nightlife – was a street riot. Chartism, a parliamentary reform movement that arose during the early years of Queen Victoria's reign, was particularly strong in Wales. On 4 November 1839 some 5000 men from the Usk, Ebbw and Rhymney Valleys con-

## THE BIG CHEESE

Any festival that includes a Cheese Olympics and a Tommy Cooper Tent has got to be worth a look. Each year, at the end of July, Caerphilly welcomes more than 70,000 people to the Big Cheese (admission free), a weekend of family-oriented fun and games that offers everything from fireworks to falconry, comedy acts to cheese-tasting, along with medieval battle re-enactments, food and craft stalls, archery demonstrations, live music and a traditional funfair.

The Cheese Olympics are held Friday evening, and include cheese-throwing, -rolling and -stacking events. The Tommy Cooper Tent – named after the much-loved British comedian, who was born in Caerphilly and died in 1984 – stages comedy acts, including a Tommy Cooper tribute act.

For more details, see [www.caerphilly.gov.uk/bigcheese](http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/bigcheese).

verged on Newport, intent on taking control of the town and sparking off a national uprising. They tried to storm the Westgate Hotel, where several Chartists were being held; police and infantrymen inside fired into the crowd, killing at least 20 people. Five men were subsequently imprisoned and three – including John Frost, who was a major organiser – were deported to Australia.

The event is celebrated in several plaques and monuments around town, notably the Westgate Hotel on Commercial St, where the entrance pillars are still bullet-scarred. Outside, among the hurrying shoppers, is an ensemble of angry bronze figures memorialising the Chartist riot.

## Orientation & Information

The city centre lies on the west bank of the River Usk, stretching south from the train station along pedestrianised High St and Commercial St to the 1970s shopping plaza of John Frost Square. The entrance to the bus station is at the northern end of this square; the **tourist office** (☎ 842962; John Frost Sq; 11 9.30am-6pm Mon-Thu, 9am-6pm Fri, 9.30am-5pm Sat) is at the south end.

## Sights

Not much remains of Newport's pre-industrial past, apart from the ruins of **Newport Castle** (admission free; 11 24hr) close to the train station – the three towers, now squeezed between traffic-clogged Kingsway and the river, were largely rebuilt after being trashed by Owain Glyndŵr in 1402 – and **St Woolos Cathedral**, a 10-minute walk west of the city centre, parts of which date from pre-Norman times.

There's more to see at the impressive and interesting **Newport Museum & Art Gallery** (☎ 656656; John Frost Sq; admission free; 11 9.30am-5pm Mon-Thu, 9am-4.30pm Fri, 9.30am-4pm Sat), in the same building as the tourist office, which covers the

town's history from the Romans at Caerleon to the rise of the coal and iron industries.

Nearby is the **Riverfront Theatre & Art Centre** (☎ 656757; [www.newport.gov.uk/riverfront](http://www.newport.gov.uk/riverfront); Bristol Packet Wharf), the city's swish new cultural centre that stages theatre, opera, classical music and dance, as well as cinema, comedy and pantomime.

The town centre is an open-air museum of quirky modern sculpture. Northeast of the bus station, by the river, is the huge red circle of *Steel Wave* (1990) by Peter Fink, now almost a civic trademark. In John Frost Square, *In the Nick of Time* is a hilarious clock tower that falls to pieces on the hour. *Stand and Stare*, a ghostly shrouded figure on Commercial St, is dedicated to local writer WH Davies, author of *The Autobiography of a Super-Tramp*. There are several others, described in a leaflet available from the tourist office.

About a mile south of the city centre along Commercial St and Commercial Rd (A4042) rise the elegant spidery towers of the **Transporter Bridge** (cars & light vehicles 50p, pedestrians free; 11 8am-6pm Sat, 1-5pm Sun), which celebrated its 100th birthday in 2006. A remarkable piece of

## THE LEGENDARY TJ'S

No account of Newport would be complete without a mention of **TJ's Disco** (☎ 216608; [www.tjs-newport.demon.co.uk](http://www.tjs-newport.demon.co.uk); 16-18 Clarence Pl). This notorious dive has been nurturing local talent since the 1970s, and still boasts a packed programme of live indie and alternative music from both local and international bands. The sticky floors and poster-plastered walls have heard it all, from the Buzzcocks and Echo & the Bunnymen to Oasis, Catatonia and Green Day, and legend claims that it was here that Kurt Cobain proposed to Courtney Love.

Edwardian engineering, it was built to carry traffic across the river while allowing high-masted ships to pass beneath. It is still part of Newport's road network, carrying up to six cars in a gondola suspended beneath the high-level track, but traffic has declined since the opening of a new road bridge in 2005. The neighbouring **visitors centre** (☎ 250322; Usk Way; 10am-5pm Sat & Sun) provides details of the bridge's history.

### Getting There & Around

The fastest and easiest connection with Cardiff is by mainline train (£3.60, 13 minutes, six per hour). Buses are much slower (45 minutes) and less frequent. Local bus routes and timetables are available online at [www.newporttransport.co.uk](http://www.newporttransport.co.uk).

For one week in early June and for five weeks from late July to late August **City Sightseeing** (☎ 263600; [www.city-sightseeing.com/newport](http://www.city-sightseeing.com/newport)) operates hop-on-hop-off, open-top bus tours (£6, four a day) that link the bus station to all the main sights, including Caerleon, the Transporter Bridge, Tredegar House and St Woolos Cathedral.

### AROUND NEWPORT Tredegar House

The seat of the Morgan family for more than 500 years, **Tredegar House** (☎ 01633-815880; park admission free, house adult/child £5.40/3.95; 10am-dusk year-round, house 11.30am-4pm Wed-Sun Easter-

Sep, visitor centre 10.30am-5.30pm Wed-Sun Easter-Sep) is a stone garland-bedecked, red-brick 17th-century country house set amid gorgeous gardens and is one of the finest examples of a Restoration mansion in Britain. The Morgans, once one of the richest families in Wales, were an interesting lot – Godfrey, second Lord Tredegar, survived the Charge of the Light Brigade; Viscount Evan kept a boxing kangaroo; and Sir Henry was a 17th-century pirate (Captain Morgan's Rum is named after him) – and the house (guided tours hourly) is a monument to their wealth and taste.

Tredegar House is 2 miles west of Newport city centre. Take bus 15A or 30 from Newport bus station (15 minutes, four an hour).

### Caerleon Roman Fortress

After the Romans invaded Britain in AD 43, they controlled their new territory through a network of forts and military garrisons. The top tier of military organisation was the legionary fort, of which there were only three in Britain – at Eboracum (York), Deva (Chester) and Isca (Caerleon).

Caerleon (Welsh for 'City of the Legion') was the headquarters of the elite 2nd Augustan Legion (they fought against the Picts in Scotland and helped build Hadrian's Wall) for more than 200 years, from AD 75 until the end of the 3rd century. It wasn't just a military camp but a purpose-built township some 9 miles in circumference, complete with a 6000-seat amphitheatre and a state-of-the-art Roman baths complex. Today it is one of the largest and most important Roman settlements in Britain. The Cadw guidebook *Caerleon Roman Fortress* (£2.95) is worth buying for its maps, sketches and aerial views, which help to visualise the settlement among the distractions of the modern town.

Begin with a visit to the excellent **National Roman Legion Museum** (☎ 01633-423134; admission free; 10am-5pm Mon-Sat, 2-5pm Sun), which displays a host of intriguing Roman artefacts, from jewellery to armour, teeth to tombstones, and shows what life was like for Roman soldiers in one of the remotest corners of Empire.

Head next for the **Roman Baths** (Cadw; ☎ 01633-422518; High St; adult/child £2.90/2.50; 10.30am-5pm Apr-Oct, 9.30am-5pm Mon-Sat, 11am-4pm Sun Nov-Mar) a block to the southeast. Caerleon's baths were once as huge and splendid as the one in Cluny

### AUTHOR'S CHOICE

**West Usk Lighthouse** (☎ 01633-810126; [www.westusklighthouse.co.uk](http://www.westusklighthouse.co.uk); St Brides Wentloog, near Newport; d £95-110; P ) Quirky doesn't even begin to describe this place – from the autographed Dalek in the lobby to the flotation tank in the summerhouse, this restored 19th-century lighthouse is one of Wales' more unusual B&Bs. Occupying a lonely spot where the River Usk flows into the Severn estuary, the building is short and squat rather than tall and thin, with four guest bedrooms ranged around a central spiral staircase like the slices of a cake. Our favourites are the two on the south side, both of which have four-poster beds and sea views. The décor is homely, a little worn at the edges but filled with endearingly eccentric details – an upside-down model ship steaming across the ceiling, an old fishing rod used as a curtain rail, a traditional red telephone box recycled as a shower cubicle. The lighthouse is at the end of a private road off the B4239, 2 miles south of Junction 28 on the M4 just west of Newport.

Evening meals are not available, but a few miles along the road you'll find the **Inn at the Elm Tree** (☎ 01633-680225; [www.the-elm-tree.co.uk](http://www.the-elm-tree.co.uk); St Brides Wentloog; mains £15-18), a contemporary country inn with log fires, leather armchairs and an intimate, candle-lit restaurant offering a modern European menu. It also has single/double rooms available from £80/90.

in France, and remained standing until the 12th century. Parts of the outdoor swimming pool, apodyterium (changing room) and frigidarium (cold room) are on show under a protective roof, and give some idea of the scale of the place.

Broadway, the side street opposite the museum, leads to a park on the left where you'll find the turf-covered terraces of the **Roman**

**Amphitheatre** (admission free; 10am-5pm). The oval structure is the only fully excavated Roman amphitheatre in Britain; it lay just outside the old Roman city walls.

Caerleon is 4 miles northeast of Newport. Buses 2 and 7 (15 minutes, four per hour Monday to Friday, hourly Saturday and Sunday) run from Newport bus station to Caerleon High St.

### THE NEWPORT SHIP

In 2002 construction work for the new Riverfront Art Centre uncovered the remains of the most complete medieval ship ever found. Buried in the mud on the west bank of the River Usk, the 25m-long Newport Ship dates from around 1465 and was probably built in France (archaeologists discovered a French silver coin that had been placed in one of the ship's timbers by the boat builder). Some 1700 individual timbers have been recovered, and are currently undergoing conservation so that the ship's remains can be reassembled and put on display in a purpose-built facility beneath the new arts centre. In the meantime, some of the artefacts discovered in the ship are on display in Newport Museum. For more details, see [www.thenewportship.com](http://www.thenewportship.com).

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