

Swansea and the Gower: what Wales's shores have to offer

The maritime heritage and stunning coast lines of Swansea and the Gower are well worth exploring. Beautiful bays and an array of castles are also waiting to be discovered along the Wales Coast Path in the Gower, the UK's first designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and home to Oxwich and Weobley Castles. Further west Kidwelly Castle stands guard overlooking the River Gwendraeth. All this and more is just a stone throw from the city of Swansea. Located just five minutes from Swansea city centre in Swansea's Maritime Quarter is the National Waterfront Museum which tells the story of industry and innovation in Wales, now and over the last 300 years.



National Waterfront Museum

At the heart of Swansea's thriving marina is the **National Waterfront Museum**, housed in an original waterfront warehouse linked to a new, ultra-modern slate and glass building. Via cutting-edge, interactive technology married with traditional displays, visitors can explore how the Industrial Revolution affected the people and landscapes of Wales and the huge impact Welsh coal, steel and iron had on the rest of the world. Visitors can get lost in the rich and enthralling history of Welsh industry and innovation, where the technology of today puts the past at your fingertips. Admission is free.



Weobley Castle

Just under 30 minutes drive from Swansea in north Gower, along the Wales Coast Path, visitors to Weobley can admire one of the few surviving fortified manor houses in Wales. From **Weobley Castle** (pronounced web-lee) rare panoramic scenery of the north Gower marshlands and mudflats can be enjoyed. There aren't many places left where a person can stand at the same window as someone did half a millennium ago to witness the same, unspoilt view. The manor house was a desirable residence, including many domestic niceties, and the spectacularly crafted and decorative windows are worth a peek. The house had a number of high society owners over the centuries including the Mansels, who also owned nearby Oxwich Castle in south Gower.



Oxwich Castle

The beautiful Gower peninsula is loved by heritage buffs and beach bums, and is easily accessible from the city of Swansea. The wealthy Mansel family chose a beautiful spot on a wooded headland above Oxwich Bay to build their dream home. **Oxwich Castle**, a grand Tudor house built in courtyard style, was positioned to take full advantage of the panoramic sea views, and was equipped with the latest luxuries — including inside toilets! Located in south Gower along the Wales Coast Path, it can be reached in just under 30 minutes from Swansea.

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Kidwelly Castle

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Further along the Wales Coast Path, 45 minutes from Swansea, is home to **Kidwelly Castle**, a truly medieval monument on a par with the other great castles of Wales. Kidwelly shrouded in the early morning mist is a magical sight. The earliest castle on the site was Norman and made of earth and timber, but was re-built in stone by the 13th century. The town is equally ancient, established around 1115 AD. Kidwelly benefited from the latest thinking in castle design. It had a concentric design with one circuit of defensive walls set within another to allow the castle to be held even if the outer wall should fall. The gatehouse was started in the 14th century, but not completed until 1422. Outside the gatehouse stands a memorial to Princess Gwenllïan, who died in battle in 1136 not far from Kidwelly.



The journey time from Swansea to Weobley and Oxwich is just under 30 minutes drive, and 45 minutes from Swansea to Kidwelly.