

Scenic Coach Tours of Gower Peninsula

In 1956 The Gower Peninsula near Swansea in South Wales was the first area in the UK to be declared by the UK Government as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or AONB. The result of this declaration has meant that the Peninsula has enjoyed special protection of its wonderful landscape so that visitors can enjoy all its pristine glory from golden beaches to soaring cliffs with green woodlands and gentle hills.

For coach tours we would suggest the following itinerary:-

Your coach will arrive approx 10 am for a Guided Tour of the 12th Century water mill at the Gower Heritage Centre with an option to have a Cream Tea of Scones, Clotted Cream and Jam followed by a guided Coach Tour of Gower.

Guided tour of the mill – guests will be greeted at the entrance by your guide, who will direct the group to the Water Wheel to begin the tour, which will take between **half an hour and 45 minutes**. It will take you all round the water-powered corn mill and saw mill, into the Miller's cottage and Blacksmith's shop, and include the history of the Mill and descriptions of milling, wood-turning and blacksmithing. There are plenty of chances to ask and answer questions. The tour also takes in the coracle display area. Following the tour, your group will want to investigate the rest of the site. As well as the traditional crafts and shops, there is a collection of rare breeds of poultry and ducks. The Centre is also home to **La Charrette** the smallest cinema in Wales. If you are a large group then you may be split into smaller groups with a guide for each one.

✚ Suggested other attractions at the Heritage Centre - **the "Egguccation Centre"**, there are often tiny chicks that have just hatched. The **Woollen Mill** has working looms, other equipment and a demonstration can be given about spinning and weaving. There is also **Glass Blower** based at the Centre and demonstrations can be given by prior arrangement. There is an impressive collection of old farming machinery, with some machine regularly put to work. Older visitors may be taken back in time if they visit the air raid shelter, and war time shop with a collection of wartime memorabilia.

✚ **Cream tea in the Tea Rooms** – this will comprise of a scone served with clotted cream, jam, Bara Brith, Welsh Cake served with tea or coffee. Our Tea Rooms can accommodate up to 60 guests. After your Cream Tea your coach will depart for a coach tour of Gower alternatively your group could purchase a light snack from the Tearooms and then have a cream tea after the guided coach tour.

✚ **Coach tour of Gower Peninsula incorporating the UNESCO accredited Rhossili Bay**- a fully qualified guide (this will be the same guide throughout the visit) will accompany the visitors, on their own coach for approximately **2 hours**, to point out the highlights of Gower: from the heights of Cefn Bryn and the historic "Arthur's Stone" to the breath-taking beauty of Rhossili beach and the Worm's Head. Rhossili Bay has been voted the top beach in the UK and in the top ten of the world.

✚ The coach tour **starts and ends** at the Heritage Centre - Rhossili Bay and areas around Gower will be covered and the guide will give a commentary on the coach as it drives around the scenic view points.

The tour will predominately take place on the coach. Depending on weather conditions, the guide will stop off at suitable points for guests to walk or take in views. If you have more active group then we can advise and organise longer walks to take in more of the views and other places of interest.

On a typical coach tour we will take the South Gower road towards Rhossili. This road was created in the 1890's to facilitate bus travel to Gower originally using open top buses to take visitors to the scenic bays. The route was made famous by the Swansea born poet Dylan

Thomas who would often travel on the buses in his youth on camping trips and to stay at Worms Head in Rhossili where a number of his poems and short stories were composed.

Along the route we will get views of the iconic Three Cliffs Bay and the open moorland and hills of Gower known as Cefn Bryn. The road also passes the larger beach of Oxwich with views of the ancient Penrice estate and Castle with its castellated lodges and interesting outbuildings. Next we pass through the villages of Knelston and then Scurloge where the guide will point out developments that occurred during the Second World War when large contingents of armed forces were based in Gower training for the Normandy Landings.

As we approach Rhossili we will get views of Rhossili Downs which has a number of ancient burial chambers one reputed to that of Sweyne the Viking Warrior who raided the coast line of Wales in the 9th Century but eventually settled in Britain to control large areas of the Kingdom. He is reputed to have formed the original settlement called Sweynes Eye (meaning Sweynes trading place) which today is the modern city of Swansea set on the gateway to Gower.

In Rhossili we get views of the breathtaking beach and also of Worms Head a large outcrop of rock jutting out from the Headland. This famous landmark was called Worms Head by the early Viking settlers as Worm means a serpents Head in Nordic and the rock structure does resemble the shape of some great sea monster rearing up from the sea. On stormy days the waves crash through a blow hole in the rocks on worms head as it seems that the “serpent” is blowing out smoke! There is a national Trust shop and viewing gallery at Rhossili and by special arrangement we have reserved parking spaces for the coach in the carpark so that everyone can take the sort walk to the viewing area on the headland where you can see the full expanse of the beach with its 3miles of golden sand and soaring cliffs. You will be able to see why this has been voted the best beach in Britain and one of the top ten in the world.

On the return journey the Guide will point out other interesting landmark buildings such as the series of small Chapels built in Gower in the 18th Century by the evangelical Lady Barham a wealthy heiress who did much to promote the virtues of education and christian lifestyles to the local population. If there is time there will be an option to take the coach to the top of Cefn Bryn for a view of the neolithic monument called Arthurs Stone. This was reputed to have been placed in position by King Arthur throwing it on to Gower - although it weighs over 40 tonnes. More likely it was placed in position by our Neolithic ancestors as part of an elaborate burial site.

✚ The guide will also advise on rest breaks (*toilet stops and lunch/refreshment breaks*) and the best route for the coach to take and access suitable stopping places, coach parks and turning areas to ensure a smooth drive around the Peninsula.

Three Cliffs Bay

