

**ROB AINSLEY**

Rob collects international end-to-ends and blogs about various rides at [e2e.bike](http://e2e.bike)

## Great Rides

# A TON OF FUN

A week's holiday for under £100! Using a new website, **Rob Ainsley** explores north-west Wales on a low-cost, high-reward tour – and shares money-saving tips

**B**ike touring is the best-value way to see Britain. I've been doing it for decades, always with an eye on the budget, and I'm practised at getting bang for my buck and poke for my pound. Last summer I set myself the target of doing a week's cycling holiday for £100 all-in – accommodation, food, transport, the lot. With my Spa Cycles traditional steel tourer and Vango Banshee tent, I explored the Llŷn Peninsula, a less travelled but beautiful part of north-west Wales.

For maximum return, I included the UK's longest possible journey. In word-length, that is: Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwll-lantysiliogogogoch to Gorsafawddach-aidraigddanheddogleddollônpenrhynareurdaethceredigion. They're only 60 miles apart, but 58 and 67 characters respectively. With a budget of £100, that's less than a quid a letter.

You won't find either long name on OS maps. Officially, the first (a village by the Menai Bridge) is Llanfairpwllgwyngyll, and the second (a train stop on the heritage Fairbourne Railway) is Golf Halt. The longer versions were fabricated for publicity purposes: 'Llanfair...' in 1869; 'Gorsaf...' (trying to outdo the other) in 1986. But while Llanfair PG's long name stuck, as people took a fancy to its just-absurd-enough length, Gorsaf's didn't and was dropped – although it still survives in small letters on the halt's sign.

**TICKETS TO RIDE**

I got there and back as I get everywhere: by bike and train. Booking in advance gives the best prices. Splitting a journey into legs run by different rail companies – or one leg into different tickets over a peak-time divide – often reduces the price significantly. (Railcards help: for example, 33% off for over-60s.) I sign up by email for train

### Fact file A ton of fun

**Distance:** 150 miles.

**Route:** Llanfairpwllgwyngyll to Golf Halt near Barmouth, via Llŷn Peninsula.

**Conditions:** Mixed, from sunshine to Storm Lillian.

**Bike used:** Spa Wayfarer steel tourer.

**Maps/guides:** OS maps 114, 115, 123, 124; OsmAnd+ phone app.

**I'm glad I had...** Google Translate with Welsh downloaded.

**Next time I would...** Explore Anglesey more.

**Further info:** Rob's route is at [ridewithgps.com/routes/48732039](http://ridewithgps.com/routes/48732039)

**Total cost:** Campsites £40 + hostel £20 + coffees £9 + beers £8 + snacks £9 + trains £14 = £100.

companies' occasional special offers (York to Edinburgh for a tenner on Transpennine; £1 flash-sale tickets on Northern; and so on) and pounce.

But often I travel for free. Because often a long, multi-leg journey involves a delay somewhere. Indeed, on this trip my train there arrived over an hour late, so I qualified for a full refund under Delay Repay. Ker-ching!

For my journey back, I used another technique. Northern's Delay Repay gives you the option of complimentary tickets anywhere on their enormous network. (Look under 'slower options' on the website.) I've transformed five-quid singles into, effectively, 60-quid returns this way. Barmouth back home to York cost me just £14 (non-Northern ticket to Chester, then complimentary Northern single for the remainder).

I've been fare-efficient in other ways. England's flat-fare scheme for buses (£3 from 2025) enables bargain journeys with a folding bike. And a few bus routes take full-size bikes: the X46 York-Hull for instance, or X62 Edinburgh-Peebles. Scotland's Citylink coaches take bikes, even supplying a free 'sock' to wrap it.

**EASY FOR YOU TO SAY**

Those train delays meant I arrived at Llanfairfechan too late to start cycling. No problem: I camped there for a tenner. Next morning I rode along the bike path that picks its way viewfully along the coast and over Telford's historic Menai Suspension Bridge to Anglesey. An amiable group of German engineering students were on a field trip admiring it. Yay! Britain still leads the world in 200-year-old technology!

I enjoyed several photo opportunities in Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwll-lantysiliogogogoch, most involving a wide-angle lens to accommodate the signs. The relatively snappy Llanfairpwllgwyngyll or Llanfair