

# Castle country

Wales has more castles per square mile than anywhere on earth. At the last count we've got 641 of them, and they come in all shapes, sizes and states of repair.

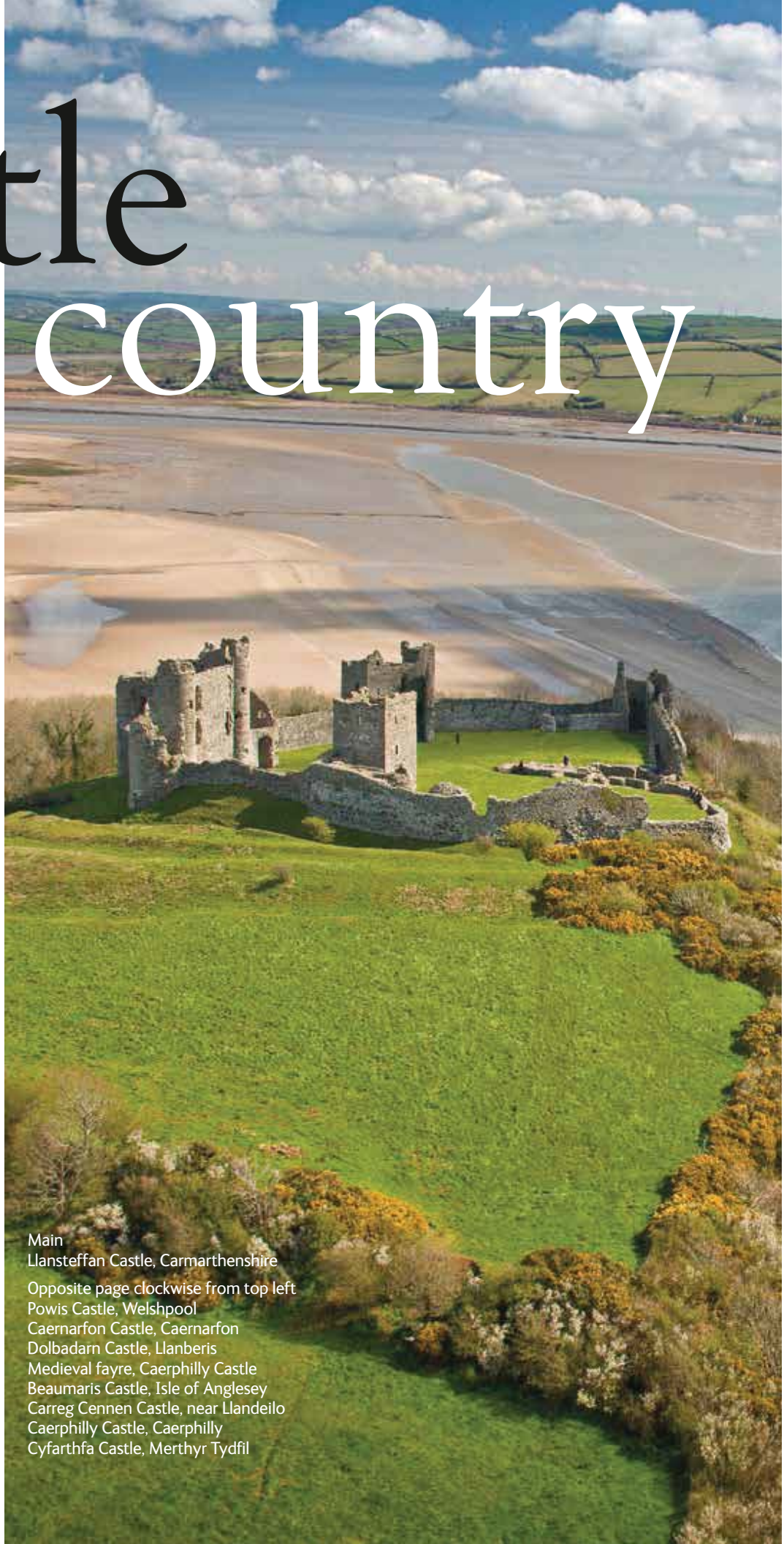
Some are faint traces on mountain-tops, where our Celtic ancestors built forts 3,000 years ago, or curious ruins in wooded glades, which come with a local legend attached. Others, like many of the thumping great Norman castles built during the conquest of Wales, have hardly changed in 800 years, give or take the odd cannon-ball scar.

There are plenty of wonderful native castles, too, built by the Welsh princes to guard their lands from the marauding Angles, Saxons, Normans and, quite often, each other.

They're not just fabulous places to visit on a sunny day. If you look a little deeper, the whole history of Wales, and Britain, is written in these ancient stones. How the Romans came, conquered, and went. How the Celtic people drew back into their western strongholds. How Welsh princes fought to keep their country intact, and how invading armies established their footholds.

There are new castles, too – the ones built by industrial barons who grew rich on coal, slate and iron, filling their stately homes with fabulous art. Then there's the legacy of the Georgian and Victorian gentry, who built mansions and hotels among the ruins of older castles (which wouldn't be allowed now, but we're rather glad they did it).

With all these castles, it's impossible for us to pick a favourite. But we're very happy for you to come and have a go, so here's a small selection to get you started. [cadw.wales.gov.uk](http://cadw.wales.gov.uk)



Main  
Llansteffan Castle, Carmarthenshire

Opposite page clockwise from top left

Powis Castle, Welshpool

Caernarfon Castle, Caernarfon

Dolbadarn Castle, Llanberis

Medieval fayre, Caerphilly Castle

Beaumaris Castle, Isle of Anglesey

Carreg Cennen Castle, near Llandeilo

Caerphilly Castle, Caerphilly

Cyfarthfa Castle, Merthyr Tydfil



## Castle comforts

You can star in your own fairytale when you spend the night in a wildly romantic Welsh castle.

### Brecon Castle Hotel

This fine Georgian hotel was woven into the fabric of the Norman castle that was built to conquer the old kingdom of Brycheiniog.

[breconcastle.co.uk](http://breconcastle.co.uk)

### Castell Deudraeth

Portmeirion has some of the most quirkily delightful

accommodation in Wales.

This Victorian castellated mansion at the village gate has been given a fabulous contemporary makeover.

[portmeirion-village.com](http://portmeirion-village.com)

### Home Farm

Set on the estate of the old Welsh royal capital of Dinefwr, this restored

farmhouse has an ancient castle and 17th-century mansion just a walk away.

[nationaltrustcottages.co.uk](http://nationaltrustcottages.co.uk)

### Roch Castle

Roch was largely rebuilt in the 1900s, and given a five-star makeover in the 2000s, but this lush boutique hotel still looks like the proper

Norman fortress it once was. [rochcastle.com](http://rochcastle.com)

### Ruthin Castle

This gorgeous spa hotel is set in a castle once owned by Henry VIII, Edward I and, according to local legend, King Arthur.

[ruthincastle.co.uk](http://ruthincastle.co.uk)