

23 GWYNEDD Y LLIWEDD

▶ Distance: 7 miles/11.3km ▶ Time: 4 hours ▶ Grade: Challenging



SEE
FEATURE
ON PAGE 64

Ascending Y Lliwedd,
with Snowdon behind.



PHOTO: TOM BAILEY



CHOSEN BY...
PHILIP THOMAS

Wales' highest
peak, Snowdon is

enshrouded as much in myth as it often is by cloud. There's the legend of a giant named Rhitta Gawr, whose body is entombed at the summit (one explanation for Snowdon's Welsh name Yr Wyddfa, meaning 'the tumulus'). There are the Tylwyth Teg (fairy people) and the afanc (a water monster). But it is the story of King Arthur that echoes here like nowhere else. Its slopes are said to be the site of his last battle, after which Excalibur was cast into Llyn Llydaw (or perhaps Glaslyn) and his body was taken across the water to the fabled Isle of

Avalon. It's said Merlin concealed his golden throne on Crib y Ddysgl and folklore tells of a cave on Y Lliwedd where his knights sleep, waiting for a day when Britain is in peril. This walk seeks out the settings of Arthurian legend, beginning with an airy scramble up and over the outlying peak of Y Lliwedd to Bwlch y Saethau – the site of Arthur's cairn. Here you can carry on up to Snowdon's busy summit or retreat down the Watkin Path into the shelter of beautiful Cwm Llan, where Arthur made his last stand.

1 Start

From the bus stop opposite car park at Nantgwynant, catch the Snowdon Sherpa

PLAN YOUR WALK



ROUTE

Start/parking Watkin Path P&D car park at end (Nantgwynant) LL55 4NL.

Walk starts at Pen-y-Pass, grid ref SH647556

Is it for me? This linear walk navigates challenging mountain terrain. After an easy walk in, there's a tough ascent and hands-on-rock scrambling (Grade 1) over an exposed ridge.

A steep but well-made trail is followed down.

Stiles None.

PLANNING

Nearest towns Caernarfon and Porthmadog

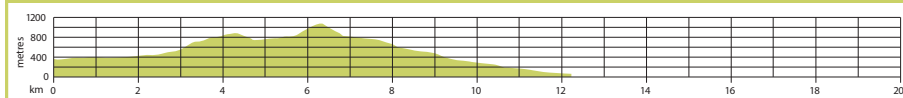
Refreshments YHA at start, Snowdon summit and Caffi Gwynant at end

Public toilets At start, Snowdon summit and end

Public transport Snowdon Sherpa bus (S4/S97) from car park to start:

www.bit.ly/snowdonsherpa
Maps OS Explorer OL17, Landranger 115

GRADIENT PROFILE



23 GWYNEDD
Y LLIWEDD▶ OS Explorer map OL17 ▶ Buy maps at: ordnancesurvey.co.uk/shop

(see 'Planning') up to Pen-y-Pass. Facing away from hostel, head for the gate in LH corner of car park and follow signed 'Miners' Track'. Follow this easy, winding track for 1½ miles, passing above Llyn Teyrn and a row of derelict mine buildings below. Just before reaching Llyn Llydaw, fork L onto a narrower footpath, leaving the Miners' Track (south).

2 1½ miles/2.4km

The path briefly shadows the shore, passing the intake building for the water pipeline feeding the Cwm Dyli hydro-electric power station. Snowdon's summit looms across the lake as the path crosses a footbridge and rises away from the water towards Y Lliwedd's craggy north face. The going gets harder as the path steepens and the terrain becomes rougher. As you rise onto the east shoulder of Y Lliwedd, the path splinters, requiring careful route finding and a brief scramble, where you may need to use your hands. Emerging onto Y Lliwedd's crest (at grid ref SH630535), bear R (southwest then west) along exposed ridge path to summit.

3 2¾ miles/4.4km

From the summit of Y Lliwedd (its 898m West Peak, SH622 533), carefully descend ridge northwest (involves down-scrambling) to Bwlch Ciliau (grid ref SH619



536), where the Watkin Path comes up from L. Join trail ahead, following it to Bwlch Saethau (just before the trail begins its final steep and scree-ridden climb to the summit of Snowdon).

4 3½ miles/5.6km

Here, fit walkers could carry on to the top (+1 mile/1 hour), otherwise backtrack to Bwlch Ciliau and turn R down Watkin Path. This descends steeply at first, becoming gentler as it drops into Cwm Llan, passing slate quarrying debris and Gladstone Rock (where the elderly Prime Minister gave a speech in 1892).

5 5½ miles/8.8km

Follow Watkin Path over bridge (crossing Afon Cwm Llan) and ignore diverging routes as trail swings down into Nantgwynant. Admire waterfalls L, before crossing a quarry incline and turning down through Hafod-y-Llan woods to road. Turn L back to car park. **CW**

VIEW THE WALK ON OS MAPS ONLINE:
lfto.com/cwroutes

IN ASSOCIATION WITH



OS MAPS



Ordnance Survey

DATE WALKED

TIME TAKEN

YOUR RATING