

Welcome to Cardiff – the Capital of Wales

Cardiff is a unique capital that offers the full range of infrastructure expected of any modern capital while at the same time boasting an enviable quality of life. Cardiff's residents believe the city is one of Europe's best places to live (ranked as Europe's third best capital city to live) and work and it has been described as the 'epitome of cool' by the renowned Lonely Planet travel guide. Visitors and residents alike enjoy a varied social and cultural life as well as easy access to outstanding countryside and coastline.

For a capital city, Cardiff is compact and manageable. Getting around is quick and easy and you can access all the facilities expected of any modern capital without the stresses and strains of life in an over-populated concrete jungle. Living and working in Cardiff makes a healthy work-life balance both achievable and enjoyable.

Cardiff is a university city boasting four outstanding local institutions; [Cardiff University](#); the [University of South Wales](#); [Cardiff Metropolitan University](#); the [Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama](#) (RWCMD) - with nine 'Centres of Excellence'. Together the universities boast 50,000 undergraduate students and over 16,000 postgraduate students.



Cardiff is defined by its diversity and multiculturalism and has an ethnically diverse population due to its past trading connections, post-war immigration and the large numbers of foreign students who attend university in the city.

Cardiff is home to world-class venues and international events; the 75,000 capacity Millennium Stadium is recognised across the world and the Wales Millennium Centre has established a worldwide reputation as an iconic arts and cultural destination.

Cost of Living

Cardiff offers all of the features and benefits of a capital city, at a low cost, compared not only to other capital cities in the UK, but to core cities in the UK. For a capital city the cost of living in Cardiff is exceedingly low. Property prices, council tax and general expenses all fall below the UK average. Wages are higher than the Wales average, meaning your income goes further and offers you a higher standard of living than in many other UK cities.

Property - Cardiff has been renowned for offering competitive house and rental prices in comparison to other areas in the UK, and the average property price in Cardiff is 54% cheaper than London, and 10% cheaper than the UK average.

Other Employment - Cardiff has experienced significant growth in employment, and offers a range of large national and multi-national employers based in and around the city-region. As the capital of Wales, Cardiff also benefits from large employers such as the Assembly Government, Cardiff Council and NHS Wales as well as many UK and Welsh headquarters for organisations such as the BBC and charities such as Barnardos. Cardiff is at the forefront of a number of knowledge intensive sectors such as ICT, creative industries and biosciences.

Environment

Although Cardiff's skyline is pierced by iconic buildings, life in the city is as much about the great outdoors, clean fresh air and healthy living.

Cardiff itself is a 'city of parks' with more green space per person than any other UK core city, as well as having Europe's largest waterfront regeneration project in Cardiff Bay. Parks and open spaces make up 10% of the total area of the city and include some impressive parks, three of which have achieved national Green Flag status. Conservation and sustainability are extremely important and Cardiff Council manages 14 Sites of Scientific Interest, 114 Sites of Nature Conservation Importance.



Cardiff is surrounded by beautiful countryside and coastline with many and varied opportunities for walking, cycling, climbing, sailing and water sports. You can go just a few miles and the city's perimeters open out onto the wooded hills and valleys that climb towards the Brecon Beacons. Just 25 miles north, and easily accessible by road or public transport, the Brecon Beacons is one of the UK's most beautiful National parks with some of the most spectacular and diverse landscapes in Europe.



Cardiff is surrounded by some of the most stunning coastline and beaches in the UK. Neighbouring, Vale of Glamorgan, is perfect for outdoor life and discovering towns and villages packed full of charm and character. The dramatic coastline, which includes part of the 14-mile Glamorgan Heritage Coast, is a mix of golden sandy beaches, spectacular rugged cliffs, secluded romantic coves and breath-taking views.



Within an hour's drive west, the Gower Peninsula was the UK's first Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, - a place to relax on award-winning beaches, and to explore unspoilt countryside, including the spectacular [Rhossili Bay](#), voted the best beach in the UK (and 9th in the world!).

Arts and Culture

Museums and Galleries - Cardiff is home to the [National Museum of Wales](#), Cardiff, home to the largest collection of Impressionist Art outside Paris as well an impressive collection of Welsh art from 15th century onwards, pre-Raphaelite works and Dutch and Italian paintings. The [St Fagan's Museum of History](#) is one of Europe's leading open-air museums, a living village representing life in Wales throughout the ages. Cardiff also has a lively arts scene with a range of small galleries including contemporary art and photography.

[Chapter Arts Centre](#) has an international reputation for excellence, innovation and collaboration with an ever changing programme of the best performance, films and exhibitions from Wales and from around the world. Chapter is the flagship for the contemporary arts in Wales and is one of the



largest complexes of its kind in Europe with 3 theatres, 2 cinemas, a gallery, studios, 2 bars, a cafe, over 60 cultural workspaces and more. If you want to scratch beneath the skin of a performance, watch life-affirming films that lift your spirits and warm your soul, see an exhibition that's thought-provoking, playful and provocative or just linger over coffee in the this is the place.

Artes Mundi is an exciting visual arts initiative that celebrates today's artists from across the world. Established in 2003, this biennial competition returns to Cardiff for its 5th year, for a major exhibition in the National Museum Cardiff in 2012. **Craft in the Bay** is home to the Makers Guild in Wales, an independent arts organisation showcasing and selling fine contemporary Welsh craft and applied art.

Theatre and Music – Professional theatre, opera of the highest quality, visiting ballet, classical music, and contemporary circus acts all mingle in Cardiff to make the city a well-rounded venue for evenings out. Wales has always had huge musical talent and Cardiff has a really strong live music and concert scene, with venues such as the Millennium Stadium, the Wales Millennium Centre, The Motorpoint Arena and St David's Hall providing the setting for international acts, and smaller intimate venues include the legendary Clwb Ifor Bach, the Norwegian Church in Cardiff Bay, Chapter Arts Centre and Cardiff University's Student Union.

The city's most iconic venue is the [Wales Millennium Centre](#) (WMC). This lively performing arts venue, also serves as a home to among others [Welsh National Opera](#) and the [National Dance Company Wales](#) and [BBC National Orchestra and Chorus of Wales](#). Recent WMC programmes have featured Circus Oz, Scottish Ballet and the 50th anniversary West Side Story production. The Edwardian **New Theatre** shows touring productions including Musical theatre, plays and children's shows. **St David's Hall**, the National Concert Hall of Wales, hosts regular classical music performances, including lunchtime concerts, and is the home of the Welsh Proms as well as bands, and comedians.



The [Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama](#) is a great hub of creative activity where the work produced is open for everyone to enjoy. The College stages over 300 performances every year, ranging from vocal recitals to master-classes, from drama productions to brass bands, musicals and opera. While Cardiff University hosts a regular series of lunchtime and chamber music concerts.

Cardiff is renowned for its diverse and lively events programme, which includes everything from carnivals, open-air concerts, street theatre and major international sporting occasions.

Literature – Cardiff is a literary centre and hosts the annual Wales Book of the Year Award, where the best Welsh Language and English language works are chosen. Cardiff's [Central Library](#) offers light open spaces, vibrant colours and wide expanses of glass offering spectacular views across the City and an exciting place to read, listen to music, learn or just relax and enjoy.

Sport and Leisure

There is an extensive range of sport facilities including first class venues for watching and participating in various sports including rugby, football, tennis, athletics, cricket, hockey, ice hockey, baseball, rafting, canoeing, sailing, rowing and a dry ski slope. Indeed, Cardiff has a world-class rugby club, a major football club (Cardiff City) and a major cricket club, Glamorgan County Cricket club. Cardiff's city centre is home to the [Millennium Stadium](#), a modern day landmark with the first retractable roof in the UK, making it a multipurpose, all round venue. Cardiff also boasts the SWALEC stadium.

Cardiff Bay has become a widely respected sporting destination in its own right. The Cardiff International Sports Village is home to the 50-metre Olympic standard International Swimming Pool, Cardiff Marina and [Cardiff Bay Water Activity Centre \(CBWAC\)](#) and [Cardiff Sailing Centre](#) which has developed a strong reputation for running high-profile events alongside its main roles as activity providers for water sports enthusiasts of all ages and abilities. [Cardiff International White Water \(CIWW\)](#) is an on demand white water facility and indoor surf centre which has hosted the 2012 and 2013 ICF Canoe Slalom World Cup.



Glamorgan County Cricket Club's headquarters, situated adjacent to the city centre and River Taff. There are also a number of major golf courses in the area including, Celtic Manor Golf Club

Cardiff also offers a wide variety of Council run sports and leisure facilities as well as a full selection of private gymnasiums and sports clubs offering a full range of facilities and activities suitable for all ages and all levels of fitness.

Socialising – With cosy pubs, modern bars, small live music venues and diverse restaurants, Cardiff's nightlife is vibrant and varied. Throughout the city, you can find a variety of places to eat, drink, listen to music and dance in. The lively St Mary Street is the busiest area for bars and clubs. Mill Lane and the Brewery Quarter are other popular city centre areas, both with a lively mix of bars, cafés and restaurants. The old Cardiff docklands have been redeveloped in the last decade to create Cardiff Bay, home to a large freshwater lake for sailing and water sports. Mermaid Quay provides a range of bars, cafes and restaurants spectacular surroundings.

Shopping

Cardiff has built a reputation as one of the UK's top shopping destinations. Known as the 'city of arcades', Cardiff offers a mix of boutique stores found in the city's elegant Victorian arcades, alongside the city centre facilities of a modern European capital.



The beautiful Victorian and Edwardian arcades still retain many of their original features and are home to dozens of unique boutiques and independent stores offering vintage and individual pieces alongside some of Cardiff's most interesting cafés and delicatessens, and one of Cardiff's most famous shops, Spillers Records, the oldest records store in the world opening in 1894.

Cardiff Market has been trading in one form or another since the 1700s. It has occupied the same

site for over 100 years. Jacob's antique market sells antique and retro furniture, records and books. On Sunday mornings Riverside Farmers Market takes place on the Taff embankment alongside the river, across from the Millennium Stadium.

Cross into the Vale of Glamorgan for towns and villages packed full of charm and character, with shops to match. In Cowbridge you'll find small independent and boutique stores, traditionally run family businesses, as well as great places to buy local produce. Just a few miles west of Cardiff, Penarth has been a magnet for holiday makers and day visitors for more than a century. Its Victorian and Edwardian founders created a resort of great elegance and beauty and their legacy is an attractive, bustling town boasting many unique family owned shops where you can find art and antiques, accessories, jewellery, fashions and foods.

Faith and Spirituality

Cardiff is home to a third of a million people, many of whom have settled here from other parts of Wales, the UK, Europe and the world, bringing with them their languages, cultures and traditions of religious faith. Places of worship provide places of welcome for newcomers, help in adjusting and integrating into a new society, and support in maintaining their inheritance of community values and culture. This is as true for North Walian settlers in the capital as it is for Bengalis, Poles or Nigerians.

Over 35,000 people meet to worship and interact socially in any week in over 200 faith communities, great and small. As well as the major Christian denominations there are also established Muslim, Hindu and Sikh communities as well as flourishing Buddhist and Zen groups, Theosophical Society, Friends Meeting House and a thriving alternative culture from Wicca to Druidism.

How to Get Here

Cardiff is easy to reach from all parts of the UK and beyond due to our good road, rail, bus and air links. Located on the M4 corridor, Cardiff is easily accessible by car and is well-served by rail services too, with frequent services to and from London as well as regular links to the rest of the UK. Regular bus and rail services link the centre of Cardiff to the valleys and South East Wales.

