

Industrial heritage itinerary: explore the rich industrial heritage of Wales

Wales has lots to offer in terms of its industrial heritage, with many industrial treasures which are well worth a visit — including a site of such industrial importance it has been granted World Heritage status. The World Heritage landscape of Blaenavon, in the heart of the south Wales valleys, offers numerous attractions including the opportunity to experience life as a miner at Big Pit National Coal Museum, and as a worker at the Blaenavon Ironworks, a site which had a significant impact on the world as we know it today. Further west is home to the National Wool Museum, located in the historic former Cambrian Mills, and in the heart of the Snowdonia mountains in north Wales is the National Slate Museum. All four corners of Wales have an industrial story to tell...



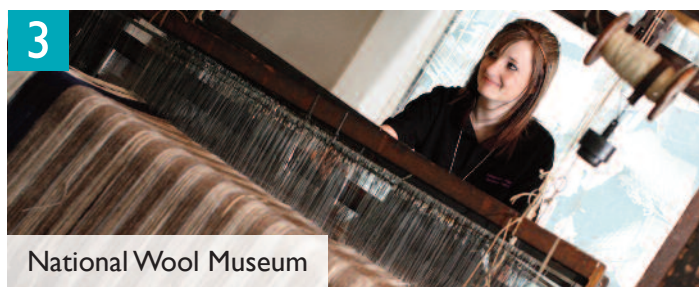
Blaenavon Ironworks

Just under an hour's drive from the capital city of Cardiff, in the famous south Wales Valleys stand **Blaenavon Ironworks**. The ironworks were a milestone in the history of the Industrial Revolution and at the time were at the cutting-edge of new technology. The power of steam was harnessed and a way of making steel using iron-ore was developed, which led to a worldwide boom in the steel industry, taking Wales's industrial might to a new height. Visitors to the site can see the refurbished Stack Square cottages, to see how the workers lived through the ages, and the recreated company truck shop. New, cutting-edge audio-post technology helps bring the story of the Ironworks to life like never before. The landscape of Blaenavon has gained World Heritage status as a result of its revolutionary form and function. From mines to train lines, you can still trace the routes in and routes out, from raw material to finished product.



Big Pit National Coal Museum

At the heart of the UNESCO World Heritage landscape of Blaenavon, around the corner from the Ironworks lies **Big Pit**, a former working coal mine. This award-winning museum offers an experience unparalleled in the country, and one of only two sites in the UK where visitors can go underground in an original coal mine. Guided by ex-miners, visitors descend over 90 metres to the very depths of the mine and get a taste of what life was like for those who made their living at the coal face. There are further facilities to educate and entertain all ages above ground, including a multi-media virtual tour in the Mining Galleries and exhibitions in the Pithead Baths and historic colliery buildings. Admission is free.



National Wool Museum

Located in the heart of west Wales's countryside, the **National Wool Museum** tells the story of the once-thriving woollen industry in Teifi Valley, which dominated the area during its peak in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This gem of a museum is housed in an original mill building, where industrial machinery and live weaving displays can be seen which bring to life the process of 'fleece to fabric'. This once mighty industry produced clothing, shawls and blankets for the workers of Wales and the rest of the world. Admission is free.

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4 National Slate Museum

Housed in original quarry workshops in the Snowdonia mountains, the **National Slate Museum** tells the story of life in Wales's slate communities when the Welsh slate industry 'roofed the world'. As well as opportunities to see the foundry, forges, sheds and the largest working waterwheel in the UK, skilled craftsmen also give live demonstrations of the art of splitting and dressing slate by hand. The National Slate Museum is twinned with the Slate Valley Museum in Granville, NY, USA, reinforcing the links between Welsh communities on both sides of the Atlantic. Admission is free.



Blaenavon and Big Pit can be reached from Cardiff in just under an hour. The journey time from Swansea to the National Wool Museum is just over an hour. The National Slate Museum is situated in the north Wales village of Llanberis at the foot of Snowdon, the highest mountain in Wales, and approx. 1.5 hours from Liverpool.