

Pennard



The view from Pennard Castle over Three Cliffs Bay

A grassy clifftop leads to Pennard Burrows and a sandy boardwalk with astonishing views over [Three Cliffs Bay](#). Fine views continue to [Pennard Castle](#), where the route turns inland across an adjacent golf course. Field paths lead to a bridle track, which drops into the beautiful (but occasionally muddy) Bishopston Valley. A woodland path climbs out of the valley towards Pwlldu Head and more stunning coastal views. Easy clifftop walking completes the round.

Fact file

Distance: 6.1 miles / 9.8 km

Height gain: 228 metres

Start/finish: National Trust pay-and-display car park in Southgate (SS 553 873)

Maps: [OS Explorer 164 Gower](#)

Viewranger: Click [here](#) for an interactive map.

Refreshments/facilities: Adjacent to the car park are public toilets, a general store and [Three Cliffs Coffee Shop & Restaurant](#).

Pennard Castle



Pennard Castle at twilight

Pennard Castle is without doubt one of the most dramatically situated castles in Wales. Perched on the edge of a steep-sided valley (there are sheer drops to the north and west), the castle commands sweeping views – frequently cited as some of the best in Britain – towards [Three Cliffs Bay](#) and across the valley to Penmaen Burrows.

The present stone ruin was probably built in the late thirteenth century and replaced an earlier ringwork defence built by Gower's first Norman invader, [Henry de Beaumont](#). This may have been built to complement another ringwork of a similar date (early twelfth century) on the opposite side of the valley in Penmaen (unlike Pennard Castle, [Penmaen Castle](#) was never rebuilt in stone).

Despite its dramatic location, Pennard Castle is small and rather crudely built: one historian has described its construction as 'amateurish', while another has suggested that it was 'built on a tight budget' (its builder, [William de Braose](#), was a notorious spendthrift). Whatever their faults, the castle's builders could not have foreseen the problem of encroaching sand. This destroyed the fertility of the surrounding land and by 1532 had led to the abandonment of both the castle and the small settlement that had grown up around it.

The walk

1. From the car park, walk towards the sea and turn right along a tarmac lane in front of houses. Just past 'The Garth', bear left on to a track between hedges. Keep ahead on to a grassy clifftop, which eventually curves right above Pobbles Beach (the preferred route is marked by Wales Coast Path waymarks). Descend along a grassy/sandy path into a shallow valley behind the beach.

2. Turn left towards the beach and then immediately right, following a Wales Coast Path waymark. Climb steeply out of the valley on a sandy path and join a boardwalk along the top of the steep slope above Three Cliffs Bay. The path begins to head inland with the flat-bottomed valley formed by Pennard Pill below on the left.

3. Where the Wales Coast Path drops steeply to the left (towards Pennard Pill and Three Cliffs Bay), continue ahead in the direction of Pennard Castle, which should now be clearly visible. Pass to the right of the castle and then shortly bear right on to a path marked by white stones. This becomes a waymarked permissive path and cuts across a golf course towards a prominent concrete water tower. Keep straight ahead at a cross-path and pass to the right of the tower.



Pennard overlooks spectacular coastal scenery

4. Follow the left-hand edge of the golf course until just before a T-junction with a gravel vehicle track. Do not join the track, but turn right and follow a line a few metres to the right of the track. There is no sign of a defined route to begin with, but after passing below telegraph wires, waymarks appear indicating the presence of a permissive bridleway. Follow these up to a junction of the track with Linkside Drive and the main two-way road into Pennard.

5. Cross the main road towards concrete steps and pass through a metal kissing gate. Turn right on to a gravel path between fences and follow this to a fork near playing fields. Take the grassy path on the left between hedges and shortly emerge in a field. The path now continues along the left-hand edge of three fields. Cross a stile in the far corner of the final field and maintain your previous direction along the right-hand edge of a copse.

6. At the end of the woods, continue along the right-hand edge of another field (this is frequently grazed by cattle). Some distance before the end of the field, cross a stile on the right on to a lane. Keep ahead for a few metres and turn left on to a gravel track. (Continuing ahead along the lane will take you directly back to your starting point in Pennard.)

7. The track swings left and then right, passing Hael Farm. Continue through a metal gate on to a rough track between trees and shortly start descending into Bishopston Valley (parts of this track can be muddy after rain). Ignore a track signed to Hunts Farm on the right and continue ahead along the signed bridleway to Bishopston and Pwlldu Bay. This drops down to the valley floor to meet a path running alongside a small river.

8. Turn right on to the riverside path, following a sign for Pwlldu Bay. Don't follow the river where it veers left across a meadow, but continue ahead along a wooded bank. At a signed fork, ignore the path dropping down steps to the left ('Pwlldu Bay') and keep ahead uphill on the path signed to High Pennard. This climbs diagonally up the side of the valley to a broken stile near the top edge of the woods. Bear left for a couple of metres and cross a stile into a large field.

9. Turn left and follow the woodland edge to a stile at the far end of the field. Continue along a grassy path between hedges and pass to the right of a house and garden. Drop to the entrance gate ('Kilgaran') and turn right on to a gravel track (you are now back on the Wales Coast Path). Climb steeply to a right-hand bend in front of a house and bear slightly left on to a path signed to Pwlldu Head. (Don't be distracted by a grassy track bearing downhill to the left.)

10. The path is obvious until it passes through a kissing gate into a field. Keep straight ahead to a kissing gate on the far side, after which the path is enclosed once more. A bit further along, look out for a grassy platform on the left where there is a stunning view down into Pwlldu Bay and along the coast towards Swansea. Shortly after this, the path begins to drop steeply towards the sea.

11. Go through a gate on to coastal common and continue straight down the hill ahead. The waymarked path then curves right, climbing out of a dip and up on to the cliffs forming Pwlldu Head. Rough stone steps lead up to the top of the headland, where the path bears right. Looking left, you will enjoy a fantastic vista along the Gower coast towards Oxwich Bay and Oxwich Point.



The Wales Coast Path attracts visitors of all kinds

12. Continue along grassy clifftops until you emerge on an unfenced lane near Hunts Farm. Turn left and then immediately left again to join a grassy track running parallel to the road across the open clifftops. Follow this back to the National Trust car park in Southgate where you began your walk.