



Taith Canwïo | Canoe Trail



Summary

Canoe trails on the largest natural lake in Wales, Bala Lake (Llyn Tegid), with the stunning backdrop of three mountain ranges. The lake is free from large boats and is an important conservation area. There are many different trails that can be paddled with access from several car parks.

Bala & Penllyn Tourism Association have checked the information given in this leaflet but changes may occur. If you choose to paddle a river or a lake then this is your decision and yours alone. Canoeing and Kayaking are 'assumed risk sports' where you have to accept responsibility for your own safety, please heed warnings, follow the Waterside Code & see Safety and Conduct information at www.GoBala.org (Information/Safety)

Tourist Information:	www.VisitBala.org or www.visitsnowdonia.info
Trails Information:	www.GoBala.org

Location:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bala, Gwynedd, North Wales Map: OS LR125 or OL23 Bala car park: LL48 6LF; SH920355 A494 road runs along the west side of the lake
Trails Information:	www.GoBala.org

Canoe Trails:

There are many different trails that can be paddled (see map on reverse side), e.g.:

- A circular trip from any of the access points (13 km).
- Down & up the lake from Bala (11 km).

Hire Facilities & Coaching:

- Bala Adventure & Watersports, based at the Bala foreshore have sit-on kayaks and open canoes to hire.
- Canoe coaching is available see: www.VisitBala.org.

Campsites:

There are several campsites around the lake - some have direct access to the lake - see contacts for more information. There is also a Backpackers Hostel in Bala with a "dripping room".

Nearby:

Lake Vyrnwy and many rivers in the area (see Canoe Wales website).

The National Whitewater Centre (Canolfan Tryweryn) is only 10 minutes away (Frongoch) for whitewater kayaking/ canoeing or commercial rafting.

The Mawddach Estuary is about 40 mins. by car and provides another excellent paddle.

Contacts:

Access: SNPA Lake Warden:
01678 520 626; www.eryri-npa.gov.uk

Bala accommodation, eating out, things to do & more:
www.VisitBala.org & www.GoBala.org

Bala Tourist Information Centre (TIC):
Leisure Centre near lake foreshore; 01678 521021

Bala Lake Railway:
01678 540666; www.bala-lake-railway.co.uk

Bala Sailing Club:
01678 520118; www.balasc.org.uk

Canoe Wales:
01678 521199, www.canoewales.com

Glanllyn Lakeside Caravan & Camping Park:
01678 540441; www.glanllyn.com

Pant yr Onnen Camp site:
01743 718 283; www.balacamping.co.uk

Pen y Bont Touring and Camping Park:
01678 520549; www.penybont-bala.co.uk

Tyn Cornel Camping & Caravan Park (Frongoch):
01678 520759; www.tyncornel.co.uk

Why:

- The largest natural lake in Wales
- Stunning mountain scenery of southern Snowdonia
- Wetlands of international importance
- No power/large boats
- Other paddling, outdoor activity & attractions available

Access Fees:

Tickets from the blue car park machine & Lake Warden's Office at the SNPA (Snowdonia National Park Authority) car park, Bala (£3-50/day, £8/week in 2013)

Safety:

- Check for notices warning of blue green algae
- Wind - take note of it's direction and strength
- Wear a buoyancy aid & appropriate clothing
- The lake is deep and cold, even in summer
- Paddle in a group
- Be aware of sailing craft
- The SNPA do not provide a rescue service

Conduct:

Much of the shoreline is a SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest), please only use designated access points for access and landing (see map)

Canoe Trails:

- There are many different trails that can be paddled, e.g.:
- A circular trip from any of the access points (13 km).
 - Down & up the lake from Bala (11 km).

Facilities and Access:

The main Access Points are (see map):

- 1 Bala Lake foreshore
 - 2 Fron Feuno car park
 - 7 Llangower car park
 - 10 Bala Sailing Club
- Level access
 - Large car park (pay & display)
 - Toilets
 - Showers (pay)
 - Refreshments: cafes nearby and in Bala
 - Lake Warden's Office
 - Car park
 - Level access over the railway track with gates
 - Car park (pay & display)
 - Toilets

There is also access from lay-bys on the A494 (Bala – Dolgellau) road these are not as convenient - typically down a long ramp or steps.

Private access is available at:

- 6 Glanllyn Caravan & Camping Site: £10/car including water fees, toilets, showers & parking
- 8 Pant yr Onnen camp site: day visitors at £6/day including parking & use of camp site facilities (excluding water fees)
- 10 Bala Sailing Club

Llangower is a good picnic location with views of the Arenig Mountains.



Bala Lake (Llyn Tegid) is the largest natural lake in Wales. The lake is approx. 3½ miles (6 km) long, ¾ mile (1 km) wide, over 140 feet (43 m) deep in places with an area of 10.24km² or 1,120 hectare.

The lake is set in stunning mountain scenery of southern Snowdonia and is a popular venue for kayaking and canoeing. The river Dee flows into the lake at the southern end and out at the northern end, where Bala is also located. Apart from safety boats, power boats and sailing craft above 5.8 m are not allowed to use the lake. Electric powered boats are permitted.

The name Bala means “the outlet point of a lake”.

The principal mountain ranges around the lake are:

- To the south is the Aran mountain range the Aran ridge rises from the southern end of the lake to Aran Benllyn (2,904 ft/885 m) and Aran Fawddwy (2,969 ft/905 m).
- To the west is the Arenig mountain range with Arenig Fawr (2,800 ft/854 m) one the principal summits.
- To the north-east and east is the Berwyn mountain range.

Bala lake lies in a broad valley, originally a major geological fault and subsequently depended by glaciation. The lake was much larger than it is now and was previously probably constrained by glacial moraine until erosion

allowed the lake to reduce in water level and size and has silted-up. The northern end of the lake extended significantly further than now - including the area now occupied by Bala town and to Bodweni (north-east of Bala). The south end of the lake also extended much further, probably to Llanuwchllyn.

The mountains were originally formed some 500 million years ago, the lower ones were laid-down under the sea while the higher more rugged mountains were the result of volcanic action including the Aran and Arenig mountain ranges.

Local legend relates that the lake was formed as punishment for the misdemeanours of Tegid Foel (Tegid the Bald) - a local prince. His mansion, with all its occupants, were reputedly drowned one night during a drunken orgy, after guards neglected replacing the cover on a magic well which would otherwise overflow at night. Only one survived - an itinerant harpist who was led out of danger by a small bird calling repeatedly, “Vengeance has come...!”. When he awoke on the hillside in the morning he saw a huge lake filling the valley with his harp floating on its surface! More recent tales exist about a monster lurking in the dark depths of the lake - know as Tegi. In 1995 a Japanese mini submarine conducted a survey beneath the waters but did not find a monster!

Wildlife

A wealth of wildlife and plants reside in Bala Lake and surrounding area. The lake is a SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) and a Ramsar wetlands site of international importance. The lake has 14 species of fish, including the Gwyniad, a species of whitefish which is unique to Bala Lake. The shoreline is the only location on mainland UK where this glutinous snail is found. Otters are present at Llyn Tegid throughout the year. The tributary rivers and streams also provide otters with a wealth of feeding and breeding habitats.

Many ducks can be seen here too, including the mallard, moorhen, coot, teal, tufted duck and goldeneye. The pochard and widgeon spend the winter here, while the great crested grebe & little grebe uses the lake as a breeding place. You may also see geese such as: Canada geese and greylag geese.

Along the shoreline of the lake you may see the following birds: common sandpiper, little ringed plover, pied-flycatcher, long tailed tit, willow warbler, reed bunting, tree creeper and nuthatch.

Over the years, some 139 species of birds have been seen around the lake, including some unusual ones such as the great-northern diver, Bewick swans and the green sandpiper. More common birds, that you may see, include birds of prey such as: raven, red kite, buzzards, hen harrier, peregrine falcon, goshawk, kestrel, merlin and sparrow-hawk. Other species of birds include: barn-owl, tawny-owl, woodpeckers, skylark, heron, kingfisher, dipper and wagtail.

Around the lake you may see some of the mammals that live there, such as: otter, grey squirrel, rabbit, brown hare, badger, hedgehog, mole, fox, mink, stoat, weasel, shrew, vole, woodmouse, pole cat.

