



A Cornucopia of Castles and Canals

Enjoy a day out exploring iconic castles, borderland villages and peaceful waterways north of Oswestry...

Oswestry has always been a border town and over the years has seen many conflicts which sometimes left the town in Wales and sometimes in England. Now the market town sits peacefully on the edge of the county of Shropshire, only three miles from the Welsh border.

Take a tour along the border to discover a cornucopia of castles and grand houses that will give you an unusual and entertaining day out.

In this itinerary you will visit these iconic locations of the Borderlands:

1. Oswestry Castle

SY11 1PZ TIME: Up to 30mins

2. Montgomery Canal

SY10 8JG TIME: Up to 1 hour

3. Whittington Castle

SY11 4DF TIME: 30mins or more

4. Chirk Aqueduct and Viaduct

LL14 5BU TIME: 20mins or more

5. Chirk Castle

LL14 5AF TIME: 2-3 hours

6. Pontcysyllte Aqueduct

LL20 7TG TIME: 45mins - 2 hours

7. Llangollen Wharf and Town

LL20 8TA TIME: 2-3 hours

8. Erddig Hall

LL13 0YT TIME: 2-3 hours

We also have plenty of extra suggestions for attractions, and places to eat and stay - how much you explore is up to you! Choose from these to plan one adventurous day, or perhaps enjoy a more gentle leisurely pace by booking a night or more in one of our lovely B&Bs or hotels? Now, let's get ready to explore!

1 Oswestry Castle

A great place to start especially if you come on a market day. Actually, to say castle could be a bit misleading - locals call it Castle Mound. It was a Norman motte and bailey castle (a hint from Bailey Street and Bailey Head!) and although there is little to see of the original castle there are good views over the town. There is yearly excavation work (in September) going on and archaeologists are beginning to think the castle was quite impressive in its day.



A stroll up Bailey Street towards Bailey Head - the market square - is the way to enjoy the eclectic mix of stalls. There are also lots of specialty markets on Fridays through the years so check our events calendar to see what's on and don't miss the Friday Artisan's market on the last Friday of each month when all sorts of local crafts people and producers come together.

Explore More...

Stroll around the **Market** on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, and you are sure to find authentic and local products!

www.oswestrymarket.co.uk

Oswestry Town Museum is open on Market days, situated in the Guildhall - explore the past lives of the people of the town.

www.oswestrytownmuseum.co.uk

The Bailey Head is a friendly and quirky pub set in a cosy beamed building. Try their range of craft ales as well as their menu of locally sourced produce!

baileyhead.co.uk

2 Montgomery Canal

Leave Oswestry and follow the A5 back towards Shrewsbury. At Queen's Head (B5009) turn left and you will find a small car park (SY11 4EB) on the right hand side. You can now walk in either direction along the Montgomery Canal. The 'Monty' is being lovingly restored and nature reserves are bringing the whole canal route back to life.



Travel back towards Oswestry and take a left onto the Shrewsbury Road and then second right to Maesbury. Take a left in Maesbury Marsh towards Canal Central (SY10 8JG) Here you stroll along the **Montgomery Canal** from either the car park at SY11 4EB or from Maesbury by SY10 8JG

Explore More...

Enjoy a gentle boat trip down the canal with **Bywater Cruises**, and meet the horses who pull the canal boats!

Tel **07941 429980** www.bywatercruises.co.uk

3 Whittington Castle

Off to Whittington now. From Maesbury head back towards Oswestry onto the A5 (A483) towards Whittington then turn right and follow the A495 into the village. You can't miss 12th century **Whittington Castle**...



First thing you will see is the moat and the impressive towers of this partly ruined castle. The moat is a haven for ducks and often nesting swans, so a spring visit to feed the ducklings is essential. From Spring through to Autumn watch out for the Re-enactment events - you could be meeting soldiers from the American Civil War, cooks and spinners from medieval times or you could spend a nostalgic afternoon at a proper village fete. www.whittingtoncastle.co.uk

Explore More...

Whittington International Chamber Music Festival: World Class Musicians gather in May for this eclectic yearly event.

Stay at **Fitzwarine House** - you can't stay closer to the castle! www.fitzwarinehouse.co.uk

A gentle stroll from Whittington to **Ellesmere** is possible along the canal tow path.

4 Chirk Aqueduct and Viaduct

From Whittington head back to Oswestry bypass and head north along the A5 (A483) towards Chirk. Take the B5070 towards Chirk.

On the left there is a turning at the side of the pub with a small car park on the right. Park here to explore the beginnings of this remarkable World Heritage site...

Plan your visit at www.oswestry-welshborders.org.uk

4 Continued...

Stand with one foot in England and one foot in Wales whilst taking in breath-taking views on the 70 feet high **Chirk Aqueduct**! A marvel of Thomas Telford's, this aqueduct was completed in 1801, and you could still be overtaken by a barge if you walk along there today. If you're feeling brave, take a walk through the darkness in the 421 metre 'Darkie' Tunnel towards Chirk.



Explore More...

Nearby **Fron Frys B&B** is a perfect idyllic countryside getaway, with stunning local farmland right on the doorstep!

www.fronfrys.co.uk

You can access the **Offa's Dyke** trail from the grounds of Chirk Castle. Walk along the historic English/Welsh border and enjoy the stunning views!



Explore More...

Enjoy a horse drawn boat trip from **Llangollen Wharf** Tel: 01978 860702

www.horsedrawnboats.co.uk

Take a ride on a heritage steam train at

Llangollen Railway Tel: 01978 860979

www.llangollenrailway.org.uk

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Pontcysyllte Aqueduct

Leave Chirk Castle and head back into the town of Chirk. Turn left and proceed through the town until you reach the mini roundabout. Take the A5 towards Llangollen. In the village of Froncysyllte, turn right signposted Trevor and Aqueduct. Cross the River Bridge and bear right following the signs to the car park. From the Visitor Centre here it is a level walk onto this spectacular UNESCO World Heritage Site, completed in 1805.

Thomas Telford's 'Stream in the Sky' will certainly test your head for heights at 124 feet high! Will you be brave enough to look down whilst travelling across? Whether you choose to cross the aqueduct by foot or by barge, you simply have to bring a camera to make the most of these unrivalled views of the borderlands!



Explore More...

Take a trip across the aqueduct with '**Jones the Boats**' Tel 01978 824166 www.canaltrip.co.uk .

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Llangollen Wharf and Town

From the car park you may wish to follow the road into Trevor and then take the A539 into Llangollen, and explore this friendly bustling Welsh town. Llangollen is a popular tourism destination, and for very good reason!

Head to Llangollen Wharf to enjoy views of the town and a trip along the canal. Llangollen Bridge is one of the 'Seven wonders of Wales', and there are pretty walks along the river, along the canal to the Horseshoe Falls – still part of the World Heritage Site, or up to Castell Dinas Bran.

8

Erddig Hall

Time for our last stop! Leave Llangollen and follow the A539 towards Wrexham. Take the turning on the right marked for Erddig Hall, and the country lane will lead you to this impressive 18th Century Country Home.

Whilst not a Castle in the traditional sense, they do say that every Englishman's home is his castle, and Erddig is no exception (even though it is in Wales!). The Yorke family lived here for 240 years, along with many servants whose loyalty and hard work were celebrated in portraits, photographs and verse. Step into a real life Downton Abbey and experience history from both upstairs and downstairs! Taking a stroll around the walled gardens will reveal the water features, fruit trees, and seasonal snow drops scattered throughout the grounds... Make sure to stop by the stable block to meet the gentle giants who live there! www.nationaltrust.org.uk/erddig



Explore More...

Hands on science makes learning fun at **Technique Glyndwr** in Wrexham. tqg.org.uk

Time to head home now? There is still more to discover - next time you could follow the canal south to Welshpool and then visit Powis and Montgomery castles.



Plan your visit at www.oswestry-welshborders.org.uk

5 Chirk Castle

Now onto our next Castle! From the car park turn right and right again, following the railway line. At the mini roundabout turn left over the railway bridge by the station, and follow the road to the entrance to **Chirk Castle**.



The 13th Century Castle imposes on you as you approach, and it is easy to imagine how impressive it was as a border fortress during times of conflict between the English and Welsh. Whilst a walk through the luxurious rooms of the castle might make you believe life here was easy, don't lose your head - 5 of the castle's owners were executed for treason! Take a trip down to the Castle Dungeons to see just how perilous medieval life could be! Keep an eye out for exhilarating medieval re-enactment events throughout summer, and seasonal walks around the Castle's charming woodlands will reveal delicate snowdrops and colourful bluebells! www.nationaltrust.org.uk/chirk