

Key Information

Lake Vyrnwy (Llyn Efyrynwy) is possibly one of the most scenic reservoirs in Wales. Nestled in the Berwyn Mountains it is surrounded by old growth forest and unspoilt countryside. It is a haven for wildlife and is an RSPB reserve, with visitor centre, viewpoints, walks and hides.

Start and finish:

Bethania Adventure,
Capel Bethania,
Llanwddyn
SY10 0NA

Portages: 0

Time: 1.5–2.5 hours

Distance: 5 miles (circular)

OS Map: Explorer 239

Lake Vyrnwy & Llanfyllin



For more

information

scan the QR code
or visit:

bit.ly/3i6N9LO



Access to the lake is from the Bethania Adventure boathouse near the dam (this is the only launch site). It is open weekends and all holidays from 10am–6pm. The launch fee is currently £5. Book in advance or on the day. Parking is next to the boat house, with a sloping gravel path leading to the water. Launch via a concrete slipway or gravel foreshore. If you need assistance accessing the lake, contact Bethania Adventure.

The water levels vary across the year. At low levels there can be a wide strip of gravel bank along the shoreline. At high levels the water can be right up to the grass/wooded bank.

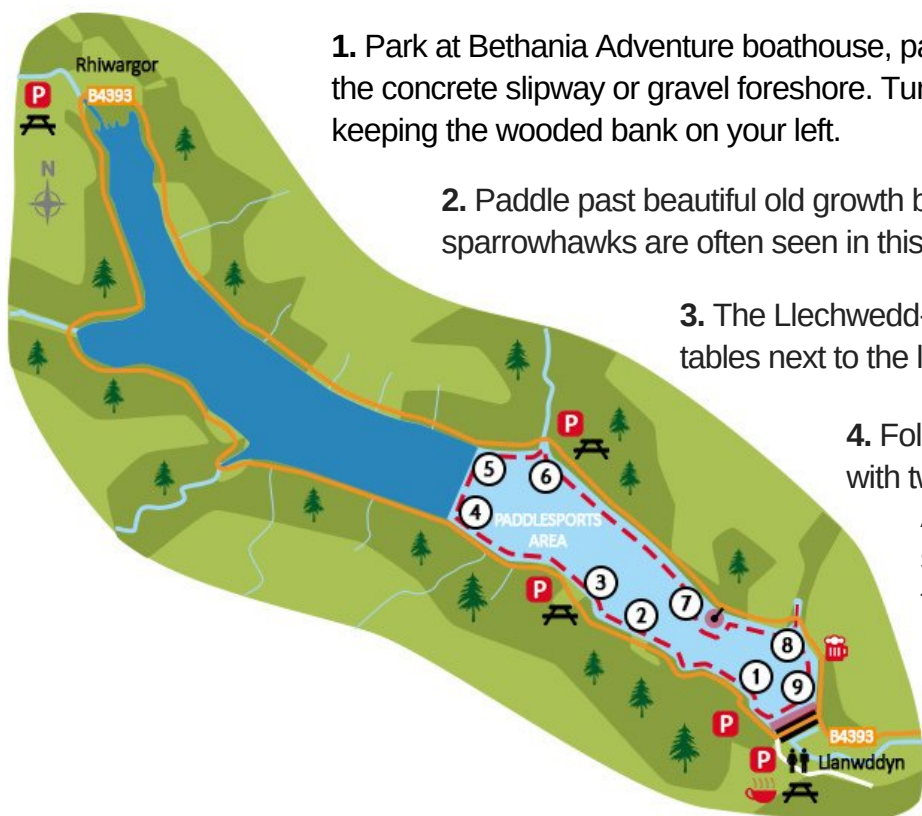
The route can be paddled in either direction: the clockwise option is described here. Lake Vyrnwy is an open stretch of water, and the wind can have a real bearing on time and ability to paddle. The route can be adapted or shortened.

1. Park at Bethania Adventure boathouse, pay your launch fees and launch from either the concrete slipway or gravel foreshore. Turn left and paddle away from the dam, keeping the wooded bank on your left.

2. Paddle past beautiful old growth broadleaf and conifer forest. Buzzards and sparrowhawks are often seen in this woodland.

3. The Llechwedd-du picnic area is a big grassy area with picnic tables next to the lake. Access is via a low grass bank.

4. Follow the banks of the lake into a shallow bay with two waterfalls dropping in under the road. After the second waterfall, which has a large stone bridge across it, it's time to head across the lake to the opposite shore. Aim to the left of the obvious dip/valley. As you cross the lake, look to the far/north end. On a clear day there are great views to the Berwyn mountains.



5. Reach the far bank and turn right, heading towards the dam. This is a beautiful section of forest with some very old and big trees.
6. Paddle into the small bay, where the Afon Cedig flows into the lake. At the edge of the bay is a large grass and gravel picnic spot among the trees, with benches and good views. Access is across a rock and grass bank (5m). There is parking above, which is the starting point of the Giants of Vyrnwy Trail (accessible). The Giant is a sculpture made from what was the tallest Douglas Fir in Great Britain.
7. The next major 'landmark' is the straining tower. There is a 10m safe zone around the tower, so please keep your distance and paddle around the outside of it. Built in 1881 and standing 47m tall, the tower filters out material in the water before it flows to Liverpool.
8. Follow the shoreline to a large stone bridge, Pont Cynon. Paddle under the bridge and into the hidden pool beyond. There are moorings here and an old boathouse, which make this secluded spot worth exploring.
9. The dam will be obvious at the end of the lake. There is a buoyed safe zone in front of the dam, so please keep your distance. Paddle across the dam then turn to return to the Bethania Adventure boathouse.



Paddling towards Bethania Adventure boathouse



The lake and straining tower viewed from the dam

The reservoir was built in 1881 to supply drinking water to Liverpool and was the largest artificial reservoir in Europe at the time. The water's journey begins at the straining tower, which filters out material in the water with a fine metal mesh. From there it flows along 68 miles of pipe, through balancing reservoirs and filtration works, to Liverpool.

To maintain the flow of the Afon Vyrnwy, 'compensation water' is regularly released through valves in the base of the dam. The power of the released water was so great that a generating plant was added in 1902. It still produces electricity today.

Llanwddyn is the small village tucked below the corner of the dam and is well worth visiting (500m from Bethania Adventure). At the top of the village is a car park, toilets, RSPB visitor centre and shop, café and bird hide. There is accessible parking next to the café and accessible toilets in the car park and visitor centre. In the centre of the village is a large picnic site, nature play park, café, craft shops, nature trails and additional parking. If you'd prefer a more pampered experience, Lake Vyrnwy Hotel and Spa sits above the southeast corner of the lake.

The valley is also home to the RSPB Lake Vyrnwy Nature Reserve: 24,000 acres of woodland, heath and farmland. Buzzards, peregrines, woodpeckers and crossbills are regularly seen around the lake, along with otters in the north lagoon. There are 6 wildlife trails which take in some great views of the valley.

Canoe, kayak and SUP hire is available from Bethania Adventure at the launch site.

Further information can be found at the following websites:

www.canoewales.com

www.britishcanoeing.org.uk

www.gopaddling.info

www.lake-vyrnwy.com

RSPB Lake Vyrnwy Nature Reserve: bit.ly/3i7Dqoh

Bethania Adventure: bit.ly/3y6ks7c



Safety and Licences

We want you to enjoy a safe trip, so here are a few tips for staying safe and paddling responsibly

Paddle Safe. Be prepared and take the right kit:

- Wear a correctly sized buoyancy aid
- Mobile phone – in a waterproof case
- Whistle – to attract attention in case of emergency
- Map and/or route description
- Appropriate clothing for the weather conditions + spares in a dry bag
- Food, drink & suncream!

Paddle Responsibly. Respect the natural environment and other users:

- Respect other waterway users #sharethespace
- Be environmentally aware, minimise your impact
- Ensure you have the correct licence if required
- Observe navigational rules – keep right and give other users space
- Check, Clean, Dry after every trip!

Licences: The waterway on this trail doesn't require you to have a licence to paddle on it. However if you paddle regularly you should consider becoming a member of Canoe Wales (or British Canoeing if you live in England). Membership gives you a whole range of benefits including a licence to paddle on 4500km of Britain's waterways and Civil Liability Insurance, worth up to £10 million. Not only will membership help save you money, it will give you peace of mind when out on the waterways. For more information on Canoe Wales membership please click [here](#).