

THE CHALLENGE...

Paddle the length of Llyn Tegid (Bala Lake) and back

DISTANCE: 7 miles

START/FINISH FROM (CIRCULAR ROUTE): Park in the Llyn Tegid Foreshore car park (fees apply), which is just past the leisure centre and tourist information on the outskirts of the town. The car park is situated on the edge of the lake, making it easy for you to get straight on the water. Head south down the lake taking in the tranquil scenery. Turn in line with the headland by the mouth of the river before heading back to the starting point.

Don't forget to purchase a permit to paddle on the lake before you launch. These can be bought from the Lake Warden's Office or the pay and display machine in the Foreshore car park.

Llyn Tegid Foreshore car park

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View from the Foreshore car park (launch/landing point)



Beach area near Llangower (nice picnic spot!)

Map key

Canoe route	Railway	Minor road	Woodland	National Trust	Fuel/Services	Tourist information	Launch/landing point
Ferry route	Main road	Waterway	Built-up area	Forestry Commission	Public convenience	Camping	Car park

LLYN TEGID (BALA LAKE) CHALLENGE

Paddle the length of Llyn Tegid and back.

Distance: 7 Miles

Time: 1-3h 30 (approx)

OVERVIEW:

Llyn Tegid, also known as Bala Lake, is the shortest Challenge Route within our collection; however it holds its own with the enchanting and peaceful surroundings of Snowdonia National Park. With stunning mountain scenery, beautiful picnic spots and rare wildlife; this route is a fantastic choice for people with less experience or those looking to build up their experience before embarking on some of the longer Challenge Routes.

With careful, sensible planning and ensuring you follow safety guidance this is truly an awesome challenge to take on and an amazing area to visit. Good luck and make sure you read all of the information below before embarking on your adventure!

Please Note: The distances for our challenge routes are rounded up to the nearest mile. The distance you cover on the water will vary depending on the exact course your journey takes. The time to complete the challenges will depend on a number of factors including fitness levels, ability, stopping times and craft used. We have calculated the guidance times by assuming a leisurely pace in a recreational craft may travel at around 3mph and a fast pace in a racing craft may travel around 7mph.

ABOUT LLYN TEGID:

Situated to the south west of the small town of Bala, Llyn Tegid; which means 'Lake of Serenity' in English, lies between the Berwyn, Aran and Arenig mountains. At nearly four miles long and up to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile wide, it is Wales' largest natural lake. The lake is a Site of Special Scientific Interest, owned and managed by the Snowdonia National Park Authority. A wide range of recreational activities take place on the lake and during the summer months the lake is mottled with multicoloured canoes and sail boats. Safety boats, power boats (except electric powered boats) and sailing craft above 5.8m are not permitted to use the lake.

The lake's famously deep, clear water is believed to be inhabited by a monster known as the 'Tegi'. However, there are many other species that live in or around the lake including otters and 14 species of fish such as pike, European perch, trout, eel and a whitefish called the Gwyniad; a relic of the last Ice Age which is extremely rare and only lives naturally in Bala. It also contains the rare mollusc *Myxas glutinosa* – a species of small freshwater snail.

The River Dee runs through the lake, which now forms part of the River Dee regulation system with the level at its outflow automatically controlled.

En route you may catch a glimpse of the narrow gauge steam train as it runs along the eastern shore of the lake.

ROUTE DETAILS:

Start/ Finish location

Llyn Tegid Foreshore Car Park

Llyn Tegid Foreshore
Pensarn Rd
Bala, Gwynedd
LL23 7SR

Grid Reference: SH920355

Warden Office Tel: 01678 520 626

Warden Office Email: parc@eryri-npa.gov.uk

From the centre of Bala town, follow the A494 south towards Dolgellau. As you leave Bala town centre, Llyn Tegid Foreshore car park can be found on the left hand side just past the Leisure Centre. The car park is identified with a brown tourist sign marked 'Llyn Lake'. Launching fees are payable to the Snowdonia National Park Authority using the car parking machine.

ROUTE DESCRIPTION:

Park in the Llyn Tegid Foreshore car park (fees apply). You can access the lake directly from the car park. The lake is very shallow at the shore line and so, if you are in a craft which has an under stern rudder, it may be better to launch from the pontoon to the right of the lake. Once on the lake, head southwest towards the far end of the lake.

When you reach the far end, turn in line with the headland by the mouth of the river before heading back to the starting point. It is possible to land at the far end and have a break and even a picnic before heading back.

Depending on the conditions, you can choose to follow the shoreline or take the more direct line down the centre of the lake. The exact route you take may depend on how busy the lake is or the weather conditions. The lake can get quite choppy and rough when it is windy.

Make sure you take some time to appreciate the backdrop of the Welsh mountains which can be seen from the lake. You may also get a chance to spot the steam train running along the narrow gauge railway at the side of the lake.

We hope you enjoy your paddle on beautiful Llyn Tegid!

PLANNING & SAFETY ADVICE:

It is important to consider all aspects of the challenge when planning your trip; from choosing the appropriate equipment, logistics and itinerary to your support crew, fellow paddlers, nutritional and hydration requirements.

Firstly, you must be confident of your canoeing ability and experience. Make sure this challenge route is the right one for you. It should be challenging, yet achievable without putting yourself or others at unnecessary risk.

When planning what type of craft to complete the challenge in, you need to ensure it is suitable for the environment and conditions you will encounter; bearing in mind weather conditions can change quickly and without warning.

If doing this challenge as part of the three lakes challenge bear in mind that tiredness can affect your stability levels, as the challenge goes on you will become more tired and will get an advantage from feeling comfortable in a boat that has greater stability, particularly if weather conditions are windy. When navigating the lake we advise you stay close to the shore line, so that if you do get into difficulty you aren't far from the bank. However be aware that in places it is shallow near the lochs shores. Paddle sensibly according to the conditions you experience.

Having a support crew is advisable for this challenge. Permits must be obtained before going on the lake; the Lake Warden can ask to see them at any time. The permits can be purchased from the Lake Warden's Centre or the pay and display machines in the Llyn Tegid Foreshore car park.

Toilets, showers and changing rooms are also available at the Foreshore car park – make sure you take 50p in with you if you want a hot shower.

To help make sure you remain safe at all times, consider the following safety advice when taking part in the Challenge Routes.

- Wear appropriate clothing- ensure you always wear shoes and a buoyancy aid. Also consider additional dry clothing, layered items, lightweight waterproofs, sun cream and hat.
- Know the weather forecast before you set out canoeing, take account of water levels, flow and weather conditions. Remember to be prepared for this to change, sometimes very quickly and without warning. If in doubt of ability to deal with the weather conditions leave the trip for another day.
- Ensure your equipment is in good condition, used correctly and your boat has sufficient buoyancy.
- Carry a small first aid kit, drinking water and food.
- Make sure the journey you plan is within your paddling capabilities and schedule planned stops to eat and drink.
- Do not paddle alone
- Follow safety recommendations provided
- Leave details of your trip with a responsible person including when you expect to return.
- Ensure you are confident in the type of boat you are paddling and it is appropriate for the type of water you will encounter when out on the lake.
- Have a map of the lake/area with you on the boat. OS maps are recommended.
- When offering assistance to those in need, on or off the water, do not put yourself or fellow canoeists at risk.
- Carry some form of communication such as mobile phone or radio.
- If completing this lake as part of the three lakes challenge, make sure you have a support crew and drive sensibly between the lakes. We do not take driving times into account; it's the time on the water that counts and we record on our leader boards.

AREA INFORMATION:

Bala is a small town with a range of food shops, cafés and accommodation, including campsites. There are two cafes very close to the lake – perfect for a hot drink and some food before or after your paddle. It also has a small petrol station and leisure centre. There is a wide range of outdoor sports and activities to do in or around Bala making it a very popular destination. There is an unmanned Tourist Information point within the Leisure Centre.

Bala Information Websites

www.visitbala.org

www.gobala.org

Snowdonia National Park

www.eryri-npa.gov.uk/visiting/places-to-visit/bala

PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

Help minimise the spread of invasive aquatic species and disease by following the **CHECK, CLEAN, DRY** campaign before putting your canoe and equipment in and out of the water (some invasive species can survive in damp or wet conditions for five or six days on water recreation clothing and equipment).

CHECK: Check all your equipment and clothing for living organisms and plant fragments. Pay particular attention to areas that are damp and hard to inspect.

CLEAN: Clean and wash all equipment, clothing and footwear thoroughly, away from the water source. If you do come across any organisms, leave them at the water body where you found them.

DRY: When practical, completely dry out all equipment and clothing before going to a new site. Dry all equipment and clothing - some species can live for many days in moist conditions. Dry your kit with towels. Make sure you don't transfer water elsewhere.

- Familiarise yourself with the local area, noting its sensitive places, protected areas and breeding seasons.
- Leave the environment as you found it and take your litter home with you.
- Keep noise to a minimum.
- Do not damage bankside vegetation when launching or landing.
- Do not 'seal' launch or drag boats to avoid damage to the natural banks. Where possible keep to designated paths or launching points.
- Respect the freshwater and marine environment.
- Avoid paddling over gravel banks in low water conditions, as they may contain fish spawn.
- Paddle a safe distance away from wildlife to avoid causing disturbance and stress.
- Constantly assess wildlife. If you see signs of disturbance move away quickly.

CONSIDERATION TO OTHERS

- Show consideration to other water users and treat them with courtesy and respect.
- Be aware that permission may be required to cross private land.
- Stay away from houses and private gardens.
- Change discreetly, using public facilities where possible.
- Drive sensibly at all times.
- Car parking - do not obstruct roads or entrances to buildings or farm property.
- Ensure your kit does not cause an obstruction when unloading.
- Leave gates positioned and property as you find it.
- Avoid damage to fences and walls.
- Show consideration to organised bank side activities, and give way as required to on-water events.
- Keep a look out for anglers while paddling. Anglers can be hard to spot on banks. Co-operate to avoid lines, nets, and swims. If it is unclear where to pass lines or swims, then quietly attract the attention of the angler and agree a route to follow.
- When an angler is playing a fish from the bank or wading, stop some way off and await their acknowledgement to proceed.
- Do not linger in pools or swims occupied by an angler.

We have taken great care to ensure the currency, accuracy and reliability of this information. We cannot accept responsibility for errors or omissions but where such are brought to our attention; the information will be amended accordingly. Users should be aware that environmental conditions outside of our control can change the nature of the route within a short space of time. It is recommended that weather and water conditions are checked beforehand, and tide timetables where applicable.

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