

Top to bottom: The Golden Road on the ridge. The coast near Newport. Ty Canol Nature Reserve. Rosebush Quarry



Weekender

More trails in Wales
 Emma's book, *Bikepacking Wales*, has 18 off-road routes.
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Bikepacking the Preseli Hills

Emma Kingston guides you around Wales's most westerly county for an on/off road weekend in search of pubs, panoramas and prehistory

Mynydd Preseli is often overlooked by cyclists coming to Pembrokeshire (Sir Benfro), but these atmospheric hills are well worth the trip west. They are not particularly tall – Foel Cwmcwryn is just 536m high – but what they lack in elevation they more than make up for with panoramic views and sheer drama.

There's a sense of the wild and ancient as you ride across these treeless, open hills with their hill forts, wooded valleys, rocky tors and megalithic monuments. Some of the rocks found here even supplied the bluestones that now form the inner circle of Stonehenge.

This route takes in some extremely varied riding, including Welsh Water's new MTB trails around Llys-y-frân

Reservoir, secretive bridleways in the Gwaun Valley and mossy singletrack in Ty Canol National Nature Reserve. The highlight of the route, though, is the historic Golden Road – a fabulous 11km bridleway that undulates along the main ridge of the Preseli Hills. Its slower, boggy sections won't be to everyone's taste, but riders who persevere will be rewarded with high-level grassy singletrack and panoramic views as far as the Wicklow Mountains in Ireland.

There are a number of campsites to choose from along the route, and a lovely swimming spot at Rosebush Quarry to discover on the way home. It is best ridden either in the spring to enjoy the swathes of bluebells and wild garlic, or in summer to allow the main ridge to dry out as much as possible.

