



Cabin Manual

Hello and a very warm welcome to Gwalia Farm.

We really hope you enjoy your stay at Cabin on the Lake. Your hosts, Amy and Dee, are here to make sure you have everything you need to make your stay here fantastic. We want you to have a relaxing and wonderful experience that you'll be itching to tell your friends about!

If something is not right then please tell us now so we can put it right for you.

We don't want to bore you but there are a few things you'll need to know to ensure you maximise the cabin experience and have a grand time. There's guidance on lighting and using the hot tub and cabin fire, some important safety stuff, plus some suggestions for nice walks and restaurants.

There are 4 messages we'd really like to reinforce for everyone's benefit!

- 1) You must wash thoroughly before getting in the hot tub and read the guidance
- 2) Be really careful with fires - follow all guidance and never leave them unattended. In keeping with fire safety guidance, candles or paraffin lanterns are not permitted
- 3) The decking can be slippery when wet - don't run!
- 4) Everyone must pee sitting down on the compost loo to stop it smelling

Whatsapp or call Dee's mobile if you have any questions or feel free to call by the house.

Contact Dee on 07980 861 640

Landline - 01650 511 377

Amy and Dee

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Health and Safety

The most important thing to us is that you are safe and enjoying yourself. It's all pretty much common sense but we need to make sure we're telling you everything you need to know.

To this end, please be aware of the following information:

- The Cabin has a carbon monoxide and fire alarm. If an alarm goes off, open the door wide, leave the cabin and alert us.
- In the event of a fire, only tackle a blaze if safe to do so. Escape to a safe distance from the fire, call the fire brigade and alert us immediately. See fire safety notice displayed in cabin area
- Be very careful with fire, never leave a fire unattended. There is a fire extinguisher and fire blanket in the kitchen area. Contact us immediately in the event of any incident
- In keeping with fire safety guidance, candles or liquid fuel lanterns are not permitted
- In keeping with fire safety guidance, smoking is not permitted in or around the cabin area. A pot with sand is provided for safe disposal of butts. Vapes must be taken home with you - do not put them in the bins
- The gas bottle has a shut-off valve on top. In the event of any problems, turn it clockwise to stop the gas and alert us.
- The decking can be slippery when wet – don't run!
- Always wear the buoyancy aids provided whilst canoeing
- Swimming and canoeing are at your own risk – don't enter the water if you are not a competent swimmer
- A First Aid Kit is kept at the house
- Please read the relevant section regarding hot tub safety

Cabin Facilities

Bedding – All bed linen, down duvet and 2 pillows are supplied, along with 2 foam pillows. If you prefer a non-feather duvet then just let us know.

Shoes and pegs – Please keep the cabin a mud free space; leave your muddy wellies and shoes at the door. Hooks are provided for clothes and there's plenty of storage under the bed

Kitchen - Cutlery, crockery, utensils, mugs, glasses, pans, cooking oil and basic herbs are provided

Lighting – Solar powered fairy lights in the kitchen area and rechargeable tea lights inside. There are also 2 lanterns and 2 head torches.

Inside furniture – The table folds down if you need some extra space and the stools double as bedside tables. Feel free to pull the bed away from the wall for sleeping.

Window Vac – when it's chilly outside condensation can form on the inside of the windows. The 'window vac' which works really well to clear the windows. Please don't use it to vacuum anything else, it can't handle it!

Outside furniture – Table and chairs for dining al fresco, plus deckchairs for a bit of relaxation. There are also 2 foldable stools for use round the campfire

Entertainment - Scrabble, playing cards, chess, draughts and numerous books

Extras

Towels – Soft, fluffy bath sheets and washcloths can be hired for £10 pp

Wood and Kindling – We provide kindling, firelights and 2 bags of wood for each night of your stay. Extra wood can be purchased for £5 per bag, kindling £4 and bags of 8 firelighters are £1.50.

Phone / Device Charging – There's a socket in the cabin supply shed which you can use, although we really recommend trying to unplug for your stay so that you can truly switch off and relax. We can keep your phones at the house if you really want a full digital detox!

Wifi – No wifi is available at the Cabin. 4G is dependent on your network with 3 and Vodafone the best whilst EE and O2 are patchy. Ty Cemaes and The Penrhos Arms in Cemaes have good WiFi. Our home wifi network is "Gwalia" and password "leeksandneeps" if you're passing and need to get online

Hot Tub Safety and Medical Conditions – IMPORTANT, PLEASE READ

Hot tubs have been linked to Legionnaire's Disease caused by legionella bacterium which can thrive in water at temperatures between 20 – 45 degrees C. At Gwalia Farm, we take the safety of our guests very seriously and are complying with the regulations to the best of our ability in order to minimise these risks.

Our wood-fired hot tub uses a combination of chemical and UV treatment / filtration systems to keep the water clean. We are confident there is no reason why our hot tub should not be safe to use, providing that our guests read, understand and comply with the advice and guidance given.

You must consult with your doctor before use if you suffer from diseases of the heart and circulation, have any immune deficiencies, are subject to fits, are pregnant or are taking drugs affecting the cardiovascular or nervous systems.

People with skin, ear, genital or other body infections, open sores / wounds, or those who have suffered from diarrhoea in the last 14 days, or are incontinent should not use the hot tub because of the possibility of spreading infection.

Do not use the hot tub while using or after using narcotics or other drugs that may cause sleepiness, drowsiness or raise / lower blood pressure. The heat of the hot tub water speeds up the effects of alcohol and can cause sleepiness, dizziness and unconsciousness. It's recommended not to use the tub immediately after a heavy meal.

Don't take breakable glass into the hot tub with you! We have some stainless steel / plastic cups, please use these instead.

Guests must wash thoroughly before using the hot tub to remove lotions, oils, make-up or skin creams which can cause the water to become unhealthy. No contaminants i.e. shampoos, bubble bath, alcohol, oils etc. should be placed in the water as this can upset the water balance causing it to become unhealthy, unclean and could result in allergic reactions.

Please be aware that you use the hot tub at your own risk. We cannot be held responsible for your safety whilst you are using the hot tub. We reserve the right to charge you for any damage caused by your negligence and / or cleaning fee to those in breach of these guidelines.

Hot Tub Do's and Don'ts



Do

- Read the medical guidelines in the manual before entering the hot tub
- Follow all instructions in the manual regarding lighting and using the hot tub
- Wash thoroughly with soap and water before getting in the hot tub – for reasons of safety and hygiene (both for yourself and others)
- Brush any dirt / grass from your feet before getting in
- Ensure the water level is above the top of the stove – otherwise the stove will melt
- Stir the water with the wooden paddle to ensure an even temperature
- Take a large drink of water with you whilst in the tub
- Get out and cool down if you overheat or become dizzy
- Be careful getting in / out of the tub and be aware that decking can be slippery when wet
- Use drinks coasters on the wooden rim around the tub
- Be careful when lifting the lid on and off, it is quite heavy. There are grab handles on each side to help manoeuvre it



Don't

- Wander off whilst lighting the hot tub! It takes around 2 hours of constant attention and feeding with logs to get to the desired temperature on first lighting
- Don't wash in the hot tub. No soaps, shampoos or other contaminants should enter the hot tub water
- Don't smoke or eat or have glass in or around the hot tub
- Touch the metal parts of the stove – chimney, lid and surrounding areas get very hot!
- Allow water temperatures to exceed 40°C.
- Don't use the rechargeable tea lights around the tub unless in a lantern - they're not waterproof!
- Tamper with the hose pipes, cables etc. If there are any problems at all then just let us know and we will help

Lighting the Hot Tub

Important – The water level MUST be at least 50mm/ 2 inches above the top of the stove at all times, if not the stove might melt (which would be both dangerous & expensive!). If for any reason the water level has dropped then you must come and let us know so that we can top up the water.

Important – only touch the stove lid using the wooden handle. The metal lid and chimney get really hot!

- The lid of the hot tub stove also acts as the air control and slides left and right. Keep it to the left when lighting and burning (so it covers the fire box but leaves the air inlet exposed). A roaring fire needs plenty of wood, plus oxygen
- To lay the fire, loosely crumple up several bits of newspaper and drop it into the stove
- Add some small bits of kindling
- Light a fire lighter and lay it on top
- Add more kindling, gradually increasing the size of wood as you lay it. Blow air down the side of the stove if it's struggling to catch
- Be patient - wait for a couple of minutes so that larger logs properly catch fire before adding more
- Once the fire is well alight keep feeding the fire **regularly** with more logs. Don't leave unattended for more than 15 mins – it's a large stove and you need to get the fire roaring and keep it roaring until the water reaches the desired temperature
- Stir the water using the paddle and check the temperature regularly. The water on top gets warmer than the water underneath
- Keep an eye on the water temperature using the floating thermometer. Body temperature is 37°C so you want it to be close to this or a tiny bit warmer. **Do not heat the water above 40°C.** It's very difficult to cool it down if you do overheat it
- Once you are in the hot tub, slide the stove lid closed to shut off / reduce the air intake so that the temperature does not rise further

It takes approximately 2 hours to get the water up to temperature on first lighting. The hot tub is very well insulated so the next time you light it will be much, much quicker.

The hot tub water has been treated and tested in advance of your arrival. We may need to check the water during your stay. The UV filter runs every night between 1am-5am.

Daily: please put an "active O2" tab into the little dispenser every morning, this combined with the chlorine and the UV filter helps to keep the hot tub clean and safe.

Lighting the Cabin Stove

There's nothing quite like a real fire. If you've never used one before then we've put together this guide to help you light the perfect fire every time.

- The fire will be laid and ready for you to light on arrival. Take a quick look at it so you know how to lay it next time.
- The air control **must** be open for it to light properly (the black knob below the stove door, slid to the right)
- Stack a few small bits of kindling. Add one fire lighter on top and light the fire lighter using the gas lighter.
- Once the kindling has caught fire add some more kindling and then a larger log
- Be patient - wait until the larger log has properly caught before adding any more
- The fire can then be controlled by sliding the air control to the left to restrict the air inflow
- If you need to have a quick blast to get the fire going again, open up the air control by sliding the knob to the right
- The wood is kiln-dried soft wood so should burn very nicely. If you're too hot you can slide the air control to the left and there's a latch on the cabin door to leave the door ajar
- **Important - use the glove provided when adjusting the air controls or opening the stove door**
- If the glass blackens, it can be cleaned (when cold) by scrunching up newspaper, wetting it a little and dunking it in ash, then rubbing the glass

General Lake Safety

Don't swim / canoe alone and if you're in any doubt of your own swimming ability you should not enter the lake. Never canoe or swim in a thunderstorm.

Wild swimming and canoeing can be dangerous and carries the risk of drowning. If you don't feel comfortable taking this risk then please do not enter the water. By using the canoe or swimming you must understand that you are taking responsibility for your own safety.

Don't drink alcohol and swim / canoe.

A life ring is provided for emergencies. In the event of an emergency, shout very loudly for help and dial 999.

Swimming

We love a bit of wild swimming so we're really pleased to be able to share our passion with visiting guests. If you're feeling hardy or fancy a dip to cool off after the hot tub then the left side of the lake is best for a swim. We recommend wading in from the right of the pier and swimming towards the left of the island where the water depth is around 6ft. **Don't jump or dive from the pier – it's not deep enough.**

Canoeing

Important – We can't get insurance anywhere for you to use the canoe!

We're providing this because we think it's great fun and as responsible adults, think you're best placed to decide if you want to take the canoe out. The buoyancy aids are designed to fit any adult and are provided for your safety. Adjust the waist and crotch straps to fit and secure using the buckles.

The canoe will be propped up against the side of the cabin and should be returned here after use so that it doesn't fill up with rain.

Turn the canoe the right way up and drag it over the bridge and into the channel to the left of the pier. Tie the boat to the post until you're ready to get in.

When getting into the canoe, hold onto the pier (and mind your fingers!), keep a low centre of gravity, move one foot to the **middle** of the canoe then and sit down. **Do not stand up in the canoe!**

Showering and Washing

It's really quite a lovely and liberating experience to be able to take a shower in the great outdoors. Please **only** use biodegradable soap / shampoo provided, normal soaps can damage the sensitive environment.

Battery Powered Shower - Unlock the lid and fill the shower bucket with hot water, either from the kettle or use the separate bucket to take some from the hot tub. DO NOT dunk the shower bucket into the hot tub! Press the red switch at the side to power on. It will make a humming noise for about 5 seconds, then squeeze the hose trigger. Move the red switch back to off position.

Conventional shower – if you'd like a "proper" shower, you're welcome to come by the house. The water is heated by the woodstove or the solar panels so you'll need to arrange a time in advance so we can make sure the water is hot for you!

Candles & Lighting

Solar Fairy lights - The green control tube is above the kitchen area. It's set to come on and off automatically but can be turned off if you prefer the darkness.

Rechargeable tea lights - A set of 12 tea lights illuminate the inside. These are not waterproof so should only be used inside. The docking station lives in the supply shed by the cabin gate and can be recharged during your stay if required.

Torches – there are 2 head torches and 2 lanterns provided. They use rechargeable batteries. If they run out of power please let us know and we'll swap the batteries. We change the batteries at each changeover but if they run down then let us know and we'll swap them, please don't throw or take away the batteries – they're rechargeable!

Candles and liquid fuel lanterns are not permitted due to safety reasons.

Beware of the Animals!

Our cats are farm cats and live outside to catch mice. They love attention and cuddles and are very good at picking up scraps, are expert scavengers and will beg. **Please don't feed them or let them into the cabin. If you don't like the cats the water pistol provided is a good deterrent!**

There is of course other wildlife and we ask that you don't feed (on purpose or by accident!) Frequent / seasonal visitors include squirrels, foxes, badgers, rabbits, ducks, geese, mice etc.

Fridge

Enjoy the off-grid fridge, chilled from fresh-flowing spring water which trickles in and out of the large bucket to keep your food and drink nice and cool. Sealed containers and bottles can sit in the water which will cool them down very quickly and put everything else in the cool bucket. Remember to put the lid back on.

Food Storage

There are also other animals around who might munch on your food in the night if given the opportunity so best to keep it tucked away in the container provided.

Cooking

Gas stove – the stove runs off propane gas. Both rings can be used at the same time. To turn on the stove, push in and turn the knob to the left. In the unlikely event the gas runs out we have a spare bottle so let us know. In an emergency there is an “open / close” knob on top of the gas tank. Please use it and call us if you are worried.

Wind shelter – if it's really windy there is a metal wind shelter which should stop the gas blowing out

Suggested Walks

To the Pub!

1.5 miles downhill to get there and it's the same uphill route back.

From the parking layby, turn right and follow the road past the house, past a sharp right bend and up to the top of the hill. Bare left and keep following this road downhill. Don't turn off and you'll hit the village of Cemaes.

At the bottom of the road (at the main road) turn right and the Penrhos Arms is 20m away - enjoy a well-deserved pint! Ty Cemaes, the shop with a cafe, is directly opposite the pub.

Up the Common, 20 mins

Don't go home without taking this quick walk. It's only a couple of hundred metres up to the top and you get a great view across the valleys towards Cadair Idris and beyond.

From the parking layby, turn right towards Gwalia House and at the bend in the road take a left through a large gate and up the track. This hillside is common grazing land so please obey the usual countryside rules, leave gates as you found them.

Follow the track up the hill-side - there are lots of sprawling badger sets here and you can see their tracks and latrines (they're very organised and clean animals!).

Retrace your steps back down the hill.

“Round the Block”

A nice (hilly) 3 mile walk (also a good run) all on single track road which loops around Gwalia.

From the parking layby, turn left and then sharp right to follow the road down a big hill. At the bottom of the hill turn left which takes you back uphill for about a mile.

A long uphill now and you'll pass a converted chapel and then a farm and the next junction you come to is a T-junction at the top of a steep hill. Turn left and keep going on this road.

You'll pass another farm and the turning to Cwm Cae, then at the next junction turn left to go downhill again all the way back round to Gwalia.

Local Information

Taxis

Mach Taxis – 01654 702048

Peter's Taxis - 07969 997039

Nearest Pub - Penrhos Arms, Cemaes – 01650 511243

Less than 2 miles down the road, this pub serves bar meals, breakfasts and takeaway

Nearest Shops - Ty Cemaes, Cemaes

Local shop and cafe for yummy supplies and a cuppa (closed Wed, Sat pm, Sun)

Co-op, Machynlleth is our nearest supermarket

Recommended Local Restaurants (booking ahead is advised)

The Brigands Inn – 01650 511999 – 6 miles from Gwalia on the road to Dolgellau. Good for a Sunday Lunch. For good hearty pub fare in a character-filled, wonky beamed pub.

Black Lion Inn – 01654 703913 – Derwenlas, 3 miles west of Machynlleth. It's really tasty! This is a restaurant not really a pub any more but they make great food.

Cross Foxes - Near Dolgellau (8 miles) and a beautiful drive to get there. Next to the Torrent Walk.

Things to do and Places to Visit

See our website for a full list of suggestions / maps – <http://gwaliafarm.co.uk/about/dyfi-valley/>

Departure

All good things must come to an end! Check out time is 10am. We'd really like to see you off personally and ask for your feedback on your stay so we can make sure we're getting better all the time. If you're leaving earlier than 10 then feel free to stop by the house to say goodbye, otherwise we'll come over to the cabin just before 10 for a quick chat.

Emergencies

In the event of an emergency get to a safe place and call 999.

We can be found at the farmhouse or call Dee - 07980 861 640 or Landline - 01650 511 377

A first aid kit is located in the front porch of the farm house.

Doctors

Our local GP, Dyfi Valley Health, can be contacted on [01654 702224](tel:01654702224). Out of hours assistance is available from the NHS, dial 111. In a medical emergency dial 999.

Local Garage

Station Garage, Llanbrynmair – 01650 521264

Petrol Station

Mallwyd - 6 miles

Texaco, Machynlleth - 9 miles

Charging Point - Machynlleth Town Car Park

About Gwalia Farm

Organic, Environmentally Sensitive Family Farming since 1979

1979 – The First Wave

Since coming here in 1979, Livy and Harry Chandler's aim was to produce as much food as they could and to minimise the family's impact on the environment. Vegetables and fruit grew in the garden, delicious eggs laid by free range hens and milk from the goats. Gooseberry, blackcurrant or damson jam was made from fruit grown in the garden. The house and water are heated in winter by a wood stove and in summer solar panels supplement this.

When they first arrived here the smallholding was just rough grass and rushes, very wet and boggy. In 1984 our neighbours dug out the lake and made it watertight. The stream was diverted so there's a constant flow of water in and out. Within 2 years self-seeded birch and willow appeared around the lake, including the larger trees at the edge of the water. Now about half of the trees are self-seeded. In 2001 the second lake was dug with the hope of creating an inviting space for waders and wildfowl.

2013 – The Second Wave

In 2013 Livy and Harry were joined by their returning daughter Amy (who left home in 1999) and her wife Dee. Amy and Dee have developed the business at Gwalia by creating the Cabin on the Lake. Building on the wonderful work done by Livy and Harry, they are continuing in the environmentally sensitive and organic approach.

The gardens have been restructured and a large polytunnel was erected in 2019 which is a fantastic addition to the smallholding. We continue to grow a variety of fruit and veg and also keep animals. Over the years we've kept various animals, including pigs and a beautiful Jersey house cow. We still keep chickens for eggs, sheep for meat and occasionally pigs too. Cabin on the Other Lake was added in 2023.