Snowdon – Rhyd Ddu

This mountain bike route of 14.7 miles starts in Llanberis. After climbing the [Llanberis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Llanberis" \t "_blank) path to the summit of Snowdon it descends the Rhyd Ddu path. Rhyd Ddu is the hardest and most consistently technical bridleway on [Snowdon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Snowdon). It starts on the opposite side of the cafe to the Llanberis trail with a treacherous push across the top of a 350m drop before descending boulder after boulder after boulder all the way to Rhyd Ddu village at the bottom.

**Snowdon Voluntary Cycling Agreement**  
During the summer months Snowdon is very busy with walkers and tourists. To avoid accidents and incidents with cyclists a voluntary agreement has been put in place, limiting the times bikes are allowed on Snowdon. To avoid an outright ban please adhere to the times of this agreement - [available here](http://www.cyclingnorthwales.co.uk/pages/snowdn_volunt.htm).

1. Start from the main car park, next to the [Electric Mountain visitor centre](http://www.electricmountain.co.uk/), in Llanberis [(GR580601)](http://streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=258060&y=360137&z=120&sv=258060,360137&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=687&ax=258060&ay=360137&lm=0). At the exit of the car park turn left onto the main road and ride past the Electric Mountain visitor centre on the left. Continue following the road straight on, past the Snowdon Mountain Railway on the far side of Llanberis, then climb to a mini roundabout junction just after [(GR583596)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=258298&y=359664&z=120&sv=258298,359664&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=555&ax=258298&ay=359664&lm=0). Turn right and follow the lane, past a line of houses on the left, to a junction with a lane on the right. Go straight on then at the end of the houses cross the cattle grid that marks the start of a very steep road climb. At about half way the lane bears left after which the lane continues climbing very steeply to the [Pen-y-Ceunant](http://www.snowdoncafe.com/index.php/snowdoncafecafe) tea house at the top, on the left. After the tea house continue ahead up the much easier incline to a gate where the lane turns right. Once through the gate follow the lane right up a short, steep climb to the signposted junction with the start of the Llanberis Path on the left [(GR581589)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=258178&y=358954&z=120&sv=258178,358954&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=555&ax=258178&ay=358954&lm=0).

2. Turn left and follow the trail through a gate then up a few rocky sections that give a good indication of what is to come. What follows is a very challenging mixture of loose rocks, slab steps, boulder cobbles, and some flatter rocky hardpack. Some sections are always a push/carry, mainly in the top third, but in good conditions the trail is about 50-70% ridable (depending on how good you are at climbing). The bonus though is when it gets too much you can rest and take in the awesome scenery. When it's open the Halfway House is a great place to stop for a cup of tea and a cake on the way up. Continue following the Llanberis Path ahead all the way to the summit [(GR610544)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=261003&y=354404&z=120&sv=261003,354404&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=555&ax=261003&ay=354404&lm=0).

3. After the obligatory summit photos, taking in the views and fighting past the crowds for a coffee the mountain has to be descended. From the summit head to the left hand side of the cafe. Go straight on past the entrance to the cafe, if it’s not cloudy, the track can be seen traversing a thin ridge ahead. Continue straight on and descend the very steep and rocky track. The rocks give way to some steep hard pack before it reaches the ridge. At the ridge the track drops over to the left. GET OFF AND WALK HERE. The ridge traverse is mainly a push and a little carry. If you don't like walking along a 6 inch wide track, holding on to rocks with one hand while pushing your bike with the other above a 350m sheer drop I wouldn't advise you to go this way. Fortunately not much height is lost on the ridge. Near the end of the ridge section the trail splits in two [(GR604537)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=260453&y=353669&z=120&sv=260453,353669&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=558&ax=260453&ay=353669&lm=0).

4. Follow the track on the right but don't look down as there is now a 350m sheer drop on the right. At this point your bike can be remounted but think carefully about the big drop and the penalty of an error before you do. When the singletrack traverse finishes the trail follows a fence that starts on the right, definitely ok to get back on your bike now. The trail follows the fence down through a number of loose and very steep switchbacks. After the switchbacks the ground flattens out slightly for a very rocky track that follows the line of the ridge before coming to a gate in a drystone wall [(GR597537)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=259745&y=353734&z=115&sv=259745,353734&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=558&ax=259745&ay=353734&lm=0).

5. After the gate the trail parallels the ridge for a while before dropping off to the left and getting steeper. On the way down the jumble of boulders just gets bigger and bigger with multiple line choices. This is the most technical part of the ride and only the best will be able to ride it all. Go through the next gate for a slightly less technical section to a short walk down a tricky steep section with water running down it that ends at a plateau. After this the trail flattens out slightly and the boulder fields disappear but the riding is still very testing. Continue along the obvious trail descending the technical rock sections and uneven boulder paving, where some speed can be gained. Even with a full-sus your arms will be burning at the bottom from the pounding of the constant lumps. The trail ends with a short climb to a gate [(GR582525)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=258270&y=352494&z=120&sv=258270,352494&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=558&ax=258270&ay=352494&lm=0).

6. After the gate turn right and descend the wide gravel track towards Rhyd Ddu village, which goes through a couple of gates before coming to a junction with a barrier [(GR572527)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=257237&y=352696&z=120&sv=257237,352696&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=688&ax=257237&ay=352696&lm=0). After the barrier turn left and descend to the railway crossing. Go straight on through the gates to cross the railway track. Directly after crossing the railway turn right and follow the track around the back of the houses, then turn left at the following junction to come out at the A4085 [(GR569527)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=256945&y=352764&z=120&sv=256945,352764&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=558&ax=256945&ay=352764&lm=0).

7. Turn right and follow the road through Rhyd Ddu, the [Cwellyn Arms](http://www.snowdoninn.co.uk/" \t "_blank) is always worth a stop for refreshments. Continue following the road straight on out of the village then around the right hand edge of Llyn Cwellyn to the Snowdon Ranger YHA. Go past the YHA then shortly after turn right up the double track, signposted as a bridleway, to start the Snowdon Ranger path [(GR565551)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=256505&y=355084&z=120&sv=256505,355084&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=558&ax=256505&ay=355084&lm=0). Climb straight on over the railway crossing to a junction just behind the houses [(GR565552)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=256580&y=355269&z=120&sv=256580,355269&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=558&ax=256580&ay=355269&lm=0). Turn right and climb the trail steeply through a number of switchbacks, going over a few water bars on the way. After a final right hand bend the track climbs steeply straight ahead across the side of the hill. When the track finally flattens off continue ahead to a junction with a gate ahead and a track on the left [(GR574553)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=257489&y=355352&z=115&sv=257489,355352&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=724&ax=257489&ay=355352&lm=0).

8. Turn left and climb the gravel track following the signpost for Llanberis. Go through the S-bend 2/3rds of the way up then through the following gate. After this continue following the track ahead to a gate in the saddle on the ridge at the top [(GR572558)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=257248&y=355872&z=115&sv=257248,355872&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=555&ax=257248&ay=355872&lm=0). Go through the gate then follow the rocky track that descends down the left hand side of the valley ahead. The descent starts with a number of rocky drops before becoming fast and flowing. Be careful of the sharp edged water bars that are good at puncturing even tubeless tyres. Continue descending the trail ahead, which towards the bottom bears left and goes down a number nice rocky sections. At the end of this the trail becomes a gravel/broken tarmac double track before reaching a gate ahead. Go through the gate, then through a dip. Continue following the track ahead until it eventually comes to a junction with a gated track straight on, where the lane turns right through a gate [(GR573591)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=257288&y=359082&z=120&sv=257288,359082&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=555&ax=257288&ay=359082&lm=0).

9. Turn right and descend the lane through some bends to the next gate, by a farm on the right. Go through the gate and continue descending the lane through the bends, going past Llanberis YHA on the right, all the way to where it ends at a junction with the main road in Llanberis [(GR578601)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=257813&y=360092&z=120&sv=257813,360092&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=555&ax=257813&ay=360092&lm=0). Turn right and ride through Llanberis to where the road ends at a junction with the main road [(GR581599)](http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=258118&y=359957&z=120&sv=258118,359957&st=4&ar=y&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf&dn=687&ax=258118&ay=359957&lm=0). Turn left and follow the road to the next junction then turn right back into the Electric Mountain visitor centre car park to complete the ride.