Headline: Green valleys sparkle with sea in Wales

Deckhead: Art, castles and landscapes come to life in British country

To be born Welsh could be considered a work of art. Cliché intended. It’s that undeniable. There’s even a proverb. It goes:

“To be born Welsh is to be born privileged. Not with a silver spoon in your mouth, but with music in your blood and poetry in your soul.”

How did they get to be so lucky? It only adds to Wales’ luster and makes it a gem in Great Britain.

The country is located on the peninsula in central-west Great Britain, covering an area similar in size to Massachusetts. The glens and valleys fan out from Welsh capital Cardiff and are movingly described in Richard Llewellyn’s “How Green Was My Valley,” as greener now than they were a century ago.

Wales has a number of sayings synonymous with its history. Often referred to as “the land of song,” it is particularly famous for its male choirs. English is considered the spoken language, but nearly 20% of its residents speak Welsh – a language known for its missing vowels and unpronounceable names like Cwmystwyth and Bwlchgwyn.

Researchers say the dolphins in Cardigan Bay whistle and click in their own distinct Welsh dialect. Thousands of visitors board tour boats to witness escapades of these clever marine mammals.

Arts and cultural institutions have grown in popularity through the years. Cardiff’s former docklands once was considered the largest port in the world. Today, it’s a cultural playground.

Climb to the top of the 12th-century Cardiff Castle in the middle of town to absorb expansive sights of the city. Caroline Street – known locally as Chippy Lane – is famous for its fast-food restaurants. Chips and curry sauce are the most popular items on the menus.

Swansea is 40 miles west of Cardiff and is the birthplace of Dylan Thomas. Guests can visit the home of the famous Welsh poet and writer at 5 Cwmdonkin Drive. The Dylan Thomas Center is near the waterfront and chronicles his turbulent life. He inspired Bob Dylan to borrow his name.

Witness some of Britain’s most picturesque and unspoiled scenery off Wales’ 750 miles of coastline. The seaside village of Mumbles marks the beginning of the Gower Peninsula coastline.

The view over Cliffs Bay can be seen from the south coast of the peninsula and describes a perfect semicircle of sea cliffs and white beach that is framed by extraordinary rock formations. Castles, medieval churches, iron-age fortifications and prehistoric stones highlight the landscape.

Wales has more than 600 castles – none is made from sand. That’s more per square mile than any place on Earth. Beaumaris Castle on the Isle of Anglesey is a medieval fortress that dates to the 13th century. Constructed by an ingenious “walls within walls” plan, it’s considered the most technically sound castle in Great Britain.

It’s surrounded by a moat and known as the “Mother of Wales.” It’s believed to be the site of Avalon – the legendary island of Arthurian legend.

Welsh food represents the country’s mix of moorland, mountains and coast. Crawl is a traditional broth that mixes with lamb, root vegetables, leeks and onions. Lavabread is made from boiled seaweed rolled in oatmeal and is eaten fried with bacon and cockles for breakfast.

Art comes to life in Wales. There’s no doubt it always will be a masterpiece.

Cutline: COASTING – Quilted clouds and a blue-hour sunset highlight Three Cliffs Bay on the Gower Peninsula in Swansea, Wales. Image: Leighton collins. Adobe Stock.