

NEARWATER – Cornish Walking Holidays

Nearwater
Polvarth Road
St Mawes Cornwall
TR2 5AY
Tel 01326 279278 Email: info@nearwaterwalkingholidays.co.uk

Detailed Itinerary West Ho to Padstow

Total distance: 78 miles (125km)

Duration: 7 nights, 6 days walking

Minimum/maximum daily distances: 16 miles (26km)/10.5 miles (17km)

Average daily distance: 13 miles (21km)

Waymarking: Most of the route is clearly waymarked with South West Coast Path National Trail acorn waymarks and is very easy to follow.

Season: April to October, though with some variations all year is possible.

Starting point of holiday: West Ho

End of holiday: Padstow

General Information

Accommodation: this will generally be in bed and breakfasts (small family run establishments) or sometimes small pubs or hotels. There is an option to upgrade your accommodation, mention in your booking enquiry.

Breakfast: this will generally consist of a cooked breakfast (sausage, egg and bacon) as well as cereals, orange juice and toast. If you have any special dietary requirements please tell us when you book the walk.

Baths: will not normally be available (hot showers will) unless you book the top rated accommodation.

Luggage: will be transferred ahead of you while you walk. It will arrive before 4pm at your accommodation. Luggage is restricted to one item per person and a max weight of 20kg. Additional items will be charged at £10 for each day walking.

Travel to and from:

By Train: We recommend train to Barnstable via Exeter (about 2 hrs from London). There are regular trains from London to Exeter, then bus from Barnstable to West Ho. Return from Padstow taxi or bus to Bodmin and return train.

ITINERARY

Day 1: Travel to Westward Ho! where your first nights accommodation has been booked.

Day 2: Westward Ho! to Clovelly. 11 miles (17.5km)

From Westward Ho! the path rises and falls before following Hobby Drive, an old carriageway built by Napoleonic prisoners of war, that winds through woodland to emerge above Clovelly. The path then follows the cobbled main street of this pretty little fishing village as it plunges past whitewashed, flower-smothered cottages to the tiny harbour that lies at the bottom of a gap in the cliff wall.

Day 3: Clovelly to Hartland Quay. 10½ miles (17km)

From Clovelly the path continues around Hartland Point, a dramatic headland with jagged black rocks overlooked by a solitary lighthouse, to Hartland Quay. Once a busy port that was mostly destroyed by storms in the last century, Hartland Quay comprises a scattering of

cottages, the Merchants House, stores and lime kiln around the remains of the harbour. The Hartland Quay Museum is well worth a visit.

Day 4: Hartland Quay to Bude 15 miles (24km)

From Hartland Quay the path continues above a rocky shoreline notorious for its shipwrecks, past the spectacular waterfall that plunges to the beach at Speke Mill's Mouth, before descending to Welcombe Mouth with its fine sandy beach. From here the path crosses a series of narrow valleys, before descending to the village of Morwenstow. Morwenstow is best known as the home of eccentric writer and parish priest R S Hawker who built the unusual mock gothic vicarage beside the church. The churchyard contains the wooden figurehead of the Scottish brig Caledonia wrecked more than 150 years ago and many poignant memorials to shipwreck victims. Leaving Morwenstow the path returns to the cliffs by Hawker's Hut, here in his driftwood cabin the eccentric priest would sit smoking opium, writing and entertaining guests including Tennyson and Kingsley. Descending again the coastpath crosses the valley of Tidna Water and then climbs to Higher Sharpnose Point, which provides far-reaching views along the coast. From here the path weaves along the coastline descending to explore a succession of idyllic secluded little coves before reaching the bustling resort of Bude. Popular with Surfers, Bude is an attractive town with an interesting little museum on the quay.

Day 5 : Bude to Boscastle. 16 miles (22.5km)

From the beach, backed by cliffs of tightly folded bands of sandstone and shale, the path crosses the sea lock of the historic Bude Canal and climbs to the cliff top at Compass Point, with far-reaching views back to Hartland Point, inland to the rocky tors on Dartmoor and ahead to Cambeak on the far side of the inlet of Crackington Haven. Wonderfully situated between 400ft cliffs of contorted strata at the mouth of a lush valley, Crackington Haven was once a major port exporting slate and importing coal from boats that were beached at high tide.

Leaving Crackington Haven the path climbs up to the fine viewpoint of Cambeak and then follows the cliff top path over High Cliff, which at 723ft (223m) is the highest point on the coast path in Cornwall above dramatic landslips to the Pentargon inlet where an impressive waterfall plummets into the sea. From here the path continues around the cliffs to Penally Point, which provides spectacular views of the sinuous channel between soaring black cliffs that leads to Boscastle's little harbour. Boscastle is a delightful village with neat little thatched and lime-washed cottages surrounding the twisty harbour and staggering up the hillside above. The Cobweb Inn on the quay is so called because spiders were encouraged to keep down the flies surrounding the barrels of sherry stored there.

Day 6: Boscastle to Port Isaac. 13½ miles (21.5km)

Soon after Boscastle, Long Island and Short Island come into view, which have the largest colony of puffins in Cornwall. The path then goes through Rocky Valley with its Bronze Age labyrinth rock carvings (some people now think they maybe Victorian Grafitti!) to the village of Tintagel with its evocative ruined island castle, the reputed birthplace of King Arthur. After rounding Penhallic Point the path passes an incredible rock pinnacle left by the quarryman behind Hole Beach. Ships were loaded by whim driven by a blindfolded donkey above Penhallic Point and quarrymen were lowered on ropes to work the slate beds. Soon after the path descends to Trebarwith Strand, a precarious little anchorage that shipped locally blasted slate, and then continues along the cliffs past the sleepy little harbour of Portgaverne to Port Isaac. Wedged in a gap in the precipitous cliff wall, Port Isaac is an attractive little

fishing village of narrow twisting lanes, slate roofed, whitewashed cottages and a picturesque harbour surrounded by fish cellars.

Day 7: Port Isaac to Padstow. 12 miles (19km)

Headland follows cove to the well-protected natural harbour at Port Quin. Port Quin relied greatly on its fishing industry, as can be seen by the size of its old fish cellars that were used for weighting and compressing pilchards during the salting process. On the headland above Port Quin stands Doyden Castle, a folly built by Samuel Seymour as a place where he and his friends could enjoy dining, drinking and dicing. The path continues around the Rumps past an impressive Iron Age Fort to Pentire Point that provides glorious views across the Camel Estuary. After descending through Polzeath to the golden sands of Daymer Bay and St Enodoc's Church, the path meanders through the sand dunes that once buried this delightful little church, before returning to the beach to catch the ferry to the historic port of Padstow. Once ecclesiastical capital of Cornwall built on a hillside overlooking the Camel estuary, Padstow, with its fleet of trawlers, netters and crabbers and bustling harbour surrounded by medieval buildings is a delightful town to explore. Buildings of note include the 15th century Abbey House, the 16th century court house of Sir Walter Raleigh and Prideux Place, an elegant Tudor mansion.

Day 8: Depart from Padstow after breakfast.