



Emma Jack
Trip Planner
Cloud 9 Adventure

+44 208 144 8102
info@cloud9adventure.com
<https://www.cloud9adventure.com>



The South West Coast Path Trek

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- Walk the Padstow to St Ives section of the UK's SW Coast Path
- Trek around 65 miles of Cornwall's wild Atlantic coast
- Devour fish'n'chips in Rick Stein's hometown of Padstow
- Enjoy white sand beaches and roaring Atlantic surf
- Finish in St Ives (visit the Tate St Ives) - art and surf central

Endless waves, salt-tinged sea breezes and Cornwall's wild and rocky Atlantic coastline on your right. What more could you want from a Great British walking holiday? England's South West Coast Path is a treasure-filled trek. It takes months to complete the whole route so we've selected the picturesque Padstow to St Ives stretch as it's one of the most ruggedly spectacular. Think mystical coves, heritage, quaint quays, top notch food (including fresh seafood in TV chef Rick Stein's home town of Padstow), fishing villages and glorious beaches.

What to expect

The South West Coast Path is a moderately challenging trek. The route is on all kinds of terrain including grass, sand and gravel paths. Happily, there are many lovely spots to stop for rest and refreshment breaks like narrow, gallery-packed ports and villages and beachfront cafes. Our itinerary includes 6 days' walking. Many squish it into 5 days, which gives a rather long last day and no time for St Ives at the end! If you're used to walking for

several hours over multiple days carrying just a day pack (your main bag will be transferred for you), you'll be fine. If you have any questions about your suitability for this trip, just get in touch.

Day 1 - Arrive in Padstow



Arrive in Padstow

Arrive at the group hotel in Padstow in time for an evening briefing with your guide at around 18:00 hrs. There will be plenty of time to ask questions about the week ahead and to explore the bars and gift shops. You'll then all go out for dinner in a local restaurant. In Padstow - home of TV chef Rick Stein - spoilt for choice on the restaurant front springs to mind.



Padstow

Padstow, ENGLAND, GB

Day 2 - Trek from Padstow to Porthcothan



Trek from Padstow to Porthcothan

Let's begin! Today, we leave Padstow walking along low-slung cliff tops above the charming beaches below. We'll get great views of the coast and coves ahead from Trevoze Head, which has a lighthouse you can stay in when you're next down this way. We'll aim to picnic at Constantine Bay. Today's highlights include Gun Point with its Spanish Armada heritage, nesting birds at Porthmissen's Marble Cliffs (time of year permitting) and potentially seal-spotting around Harlyn Bay. Hold your nose for Stinking Bay...

- Accommodation: hotel or B&B
- Luggage access
- Walking: approx 5 hrs
- Distance: 21 km / 13 miles
- Altitude gain / loss: 770m



Porthcothan

Porthcothan, England, GB, PL28 8LW

Day 3 - Trek from Porthcothan to Newquay



Trek from Porthcothan to Newquay

Things get a bit more dramatic and rugged today. This calamitous bit of coast, with its confusing coves and jutting headlands, has put paid to many vessels down the years and has the legends to match. The three-mile long expanse of Watergate Bay is something to behold, as are the surfers on Fistral beach at the day's end in Newquay. Today, spotting oystercatchers and bottle-nosed dolphins isn't unheard of. Today's highlights include all the ancient tumuli at Barrowfields, Griffin Point Iron Age cliff castle and the pillars of rock which rise from the National Trust's beautiful Bedruthan beach.

- Accommodation: hotel or B&B
- Luggage access
- Walking: approx 4 hrs
- Distance: 17 km / 10.5 miles
- Altitude gain / loss: 535m



Newquay

Newquay, England, GB

Day 4 - Trek from Newquay to Perranporth



Trek from Newquay to Perranporth

There are some phenomenal pasty shops in Newquay if you want to tuck a little treat into your knapsack for elevenses! This morning we'll leave the colourful, narrow streets of Newquay behind, heading out of town across Fistral beach. Its perfect setting and ideal waves combine to make this a surfing mecca. Botanists can now come into their own as we cross the West Pentire headland which is rich in wildflowers. Ornithologists, we haven't forgotten you. Alongside the colonies of waders and kittiwakes, thousands of birds find winter shelter in the region. Look out for ringed plover, dunlin, greenshank, teal and curlew. The dunes at Holywell beach are an insect-packed highlight.

- Accommodation: hotel or B&B
- Luggage access
- Walking: approx 4-5 hrs
- Distance: 18 km / 11 miles
- Altitude gain / loss: 482m



Perranporth
Perranporth, England, GB

Day 5 - Trek from Perranporth to Portreath



Trek from Perranporth to Portreath

Today we're officially on Cornish Time which is 20 minutes behind GMT. Who knew! This will be corroborated at the Millennium Sundial at Droskyn mine, which overlooks Perran Bay. The walking today is tougher, with more up and down than usual as we traverse an ancient mining area. Bats have now made their home in many of the caves and the St Agnes Head region is very popular with birders. Razorbills, guillemots and potentially puffins might be seen today. Geological treats today are the mineral-stripped granite rocks at Cligga Head, spotting seals off Newdowns Head, and the Poldark-esque cliff-top tin mine ruins at Wheal Coates.

- Accommodation: hotel or B&B
- Luggage access
- Walking: approx 5-6 hrs
- Distance: 19 km / 12 miles
- Altitude gain / loss: 748m



Portreath
England, GB

Day 6 - Trek from Portreath to Hayle



Trek from Portreath to Hayle

On today's trek we'll follow the cliffs over rocky coves with evocative names like Ralph's Cupboard - named after a prolific smuggler no doubt. We'll encounter varied terrain from estuaries to cliff tops to dunes to keep us on our toes. There are some steeper climbs initially but then we even out and hit our stride for the day. Wildflowers often dominate such as blue sheep's bit and primroses. Seals, sunfish and sharks have been spotted on the coastlines of Godrevy and Gwithian. Eyes peeled, who's got the binoculars today? Godrevy Island's lighthouse, out across St Ives Bay, was perhaps Virginia Woolf's muse for 'To The Lighthouse'. The sheer drama of Hell's Mouth is one of our favourite photo stops today.

- Accommodation: hotel or B&B
- Luggage access
- Walking: approx 4-5 hrs
- Distance: 19 km / 12 miles



Hayle
Hayle, England, GB

Day 7 - Trek from Hayle to St Ives



Trek from Hayle to St Ives

Where did the week go, today is our sixth and final day on the South West Coast Path. Today is a short day to allow for a wind down walk and a full and pleasant evening in St Ives. We cross Hayle's 100-year-old swing bridge - Britain's oldest - and continue across bird-filled mud flats. Hayle was once Cornwall's most important industrial port and a significant centre for the copper trade. We'll join the pilgrimage trail of St Michael's Way for a stint, before continuing on to end our journey in delightful St Ives. Home to the Tate St Ives, the town really needs a few days to explore it properly with its plethora of high quality cafes, artisan gift shops and galleries.

- Accommodation: hotel or B&B
- Luggage access
- Walking: approx 2-3 hrs
- Distance: 10 km / 6 miles



Saint Ives

Saint Ives, ENGLAND, GB, TR26 1ER
+44 1736 795346

Day 8 - Departure day



Depart St Ives

Your guided Cloud 9 Adventure trek along the South West Coast Path comes to a close after breakfast today. Why not stay on in this beautiful part of the country, using St Ives as a base to explore Cornwall's southern coast.

Information & Documents



What's included

- All accommodation
- All breakfasts
- Any transport mentioned in the itinerary
- Daily luggage transfers
- A qualified and expert International Mountain Leader



Not Included

- Flights
- Travel to start / finish of the trip
- Lunches
- Evening meals
- Personal drinks and snacks
- Any transport, accommodation or additional expenses due to a participant being unable to complete the itinerary
- Travel insurance (compulsory)
- Tips



What to expect: South West Coast Path

The hiking

The South West Coast Path has a real mixture of terrain. It can be anything from wide, smooth tracks, to beaches and dunes to narrow, rockier tracks or steeper coastal hills and cliffs. We'll trek across beaches and headlands and pass through woodland, fields, mud flats, small fishing villages and ports and the larger seaside resorts of Cornwall's Atlantic North Coast. It truly is a varied trek. In terms of difficulty, we grade it as 'Moderate', at 4 to 5 out of 10. Anyone with a good general level of fitness who is able to carry a day sack and trek for multiple hours on multiple consecutive days will be fine. It is often possible to sit out for a day if you are feeling tired. You may be able to travel with the luggage or there are good public transport links between the nightly stops.

The accommodation

We generally stay in comfortable hotels, though high quality guest houses and traditional B&Bs may also be used depending on the destination. We really favour staying in family-owned places over corporate chains. You may find some of the accommodation quirky, but it is all charming. Each accommodation has been chosen for a different reason, but each time it is because they do something that stands out over the other providers in the same places.

We always book twin rooms wherever possible, and en-suite bathrooms wherever possible. In a number of places there just simply aren't enough rooms for a large group, so if there are quite a few of you then we sometimes split the group over two nearby B&Bs, or use triples if necessary, but we'll let you know if this is the case.

The food

The food in Cornwall is hearty, and often produced locally. Breakfasts are usually a selection of fruits, yoghurts, cereals, toast and of course the option of any version of a full English breakfast (eggs, bacon, sausages, black pudding, baked beans). Packed lunches can usually be ordered at the accommodation for around £6-£8, or you have various opportunities to stop at shops in the various villages we stay in and stock up throughout the trip.

Evening meals are not included, and we usually eat out together as a group (the guide will book a local pub or restaurant). Classic dishes include hearty crab sandwiches and salads, beer-battered fish and chips, local Cornish pasties and favourites like lamb shank with mashed potato, pasta dishes and steak and kidney pie. Local seafood is a highlight, too.

Luggage delivery

We deliver your luggage each day using a local delivery company. It's much more economical than having a private driver, but it does mean that we can't determine what time it will happen. It also means that you can't guarantee that you'll be able to travel with the luggage if you need to sit out for a day - you often can, but it is either first-come first-served, or greater need!

Your trip price includes the delivery of 1 kit bag weighing up to 20kg. If you would like to bring an extra bag, that is no problem but there will be a charge of £125 per bag and it must be booked in advance.

Money and Tipping

The UK currency is the pound (GBP or £) and you will need to budget around £5-8 per day for packed lunches, and around £20-£25 per day for evening meals (if you are on a budget you can often have a main course for around £10-£15. The £20-25 suggested amount is more if you are having two or more courses and would like to drink some wine or beer).

A pint of beer or local cider costs around £3.50-£4.75.

You are not normally expected to tip in a bar, but if you have had table service then 10% is the norm.

The Weather

The weather in Cornwall is generally suitable for hiking between April and October. April and May can be excellent months for relative dryness and warm temperatures. Any time in June, July and August is likely to be warm enough to be comfortable. In autumn, September and October are usually cooler, and quieter, and can be very pleasant.

In any month you can expect either sunshine, rain (light or heavy), hail, cloud, fog, and, less frequently, snow - so you should come prepared for any eventuality!

Recommended reading, watching and maps

The Salt Path: a memoir - Published in 2018, this is the uplifting true story of the couple who lost everything and embarked on a journey of salvation across the UK's windswept South West Coast Path.

Walking the South West Coast Path - A Cicerone guidebook to the whole route.

St Ives to Padstow: Walks Along the South West Coast Path - By Ruth Luckhurst. Details this one-week section of the trail in more depth.

Poldark - This TV series filmed on location at many of the locations you'll walk through. Watch it for evocative seascapes and instantly recognisable views such as the sea rocks of Holywell Bay.

If you would like more precision then the following 1:25,000 OS (Ordnance Survey) Explorer maps are useful:

- OS Explorer 106 Newquay and Padstow
- OS Explorer 104 Redruth and St Agnes
- OS Explorer 102 Land's End



General information - Guided group trip in the UK Insurance

It is a condition of booking this holiday that you must be insured against medical and personal accident risks (this must include helicopter rescue and repatriation costs). You may find that your annual multi-trip insurance covers this trip. We would also recommend that you take out holiday cancellation insurance: your deposit is non-refundable once you have booked, and the full balance is usually non-refundable (see our Terms and Conditions for further details).

Responsible Travel

Cloud 9 Adventure is joining the Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency movement. We do everything we can to minimise our impact on the environment. We care about the places we visit, and our philosophy is simple: that each and every one of our trips has a positive impact on the local community and environment. We use family-run hotels, guest-houses, B&Bs and restaurants in order to support the local communities. And it's a small step but we also recommend carbon off-setting. Visit www.climatecare.org.

Adventure Travel

Please note that we specialise in Adventure Travel, the nature of which means that we cannot always follow our itinerary for a variety of reasons. All of our holidays can be subject to unexpected changes and you should be prepared to be flexible to accommodate these where necessary.

We update our itineraries on a regular basis to take into account such things as changes to trekking routes and the conditions of footpaths, but it is not always possible to guarantee that any of our holidays will run exactly according to the proposed itinerary. If during your holiday the itinerary is affected by immediate or local circumstances, the leader will make any changes that are necessary.

Group Size and Holiday Status

For each of our group adventures, there is a minimum number of participants required in order for the trip to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from "Available" to "Guaranteed". In order to achieve minimum numbers, we run the trips in conjunction with several other small companies. We find that co-selling in this way means that almost all of our trips become "Guaranteed", and means that rather than 2 or 3 different companies all selling trips with 2-3 clients each, combining together with 1 guide means that we can offer the trips at a better price to you, and means that we achieve the minimum number faster. We are a small company with a high level of customer service, and we make sure that we only run trips in conjunction with companies who share our ethos. We know them well and have worked with them for years, and only use leaders who we know and trust to do an excellent job. We steer clear of large groups and cap our group size at 10 people for summer hiking trips, and 8 people for winter snowshoe or cross country ski trips, whilst many of the larger operators take up to 16 people.

Preparing for your holiday

We have tried to grade the holiday as accurately as we can, with the intention of attracting people of similar abilities to each trip. As a general guideline, if we have described a trek as being tough or challenging, then you need to be fit and capable of the challenge. If you don't arrive in good shape for your trip, then you could be putting yourself and others in danger: if you're taking too long each day, at best it cuts into the time you have to relax and shower before dinner, and at worst, it can be the difference between the whole group being caught in an afternoon storm. As we are as accurate as we can be writing our trip notes, we do tend to be pretty good at making sure that the right people book each trip, but we do require a certain amount of personal responsibility for arriving fit and ready for your trip. We're not on a route-march so we are never expecting to be going too fast - we try to walk at a slow, steady pace, without the need to stop too frequently for rests. If you're worried about this, then please start with one of our easier trips graded Easy or Moderate, and you can build up to a Challenging trip. If you've booked an Extremely Tough trip, then you definitely need to be an experienced and fit hiker, used to long days in the hills.

Rather than hoping your trek will make you fitter (it will definitely help!), it makes a lot of sense to spend some time before your trip getting some additional exercise and preparing properly. The fitter you are, the more enjoyable your trip will be. The best preparation is long day hikes in the run-up to your trip.

We would also recommend that you adopt a weekly exercise regime leading up to your trip. Jogging, circuit training, squash and swimming are good for developing better stamina. Before departure, we also suggest that you try to fit in a number of long hikes in hilly terrain.

Summer Kit List - Guided Groups with Luggage Delivery

Essential items :

- **Rucksack** – approx. 30-40L - for you to carry each day



- **Kit bag or suitcase** - for your main luggage to be transported. Max 15 kg and 1 per person (extra bags may incur a supplement).
- **Hiking boots** – you need to have a pair of waterproof hiking boots with ankle support and a good sole. Hiking trainers are okay for some days, but would not be appropriate in really bad weather, on rougher terrain, or when there is snow, so if you are thinking of bringing hiking shoes or trainers, you'll need boots in addition to those for the more rugged days. Sandals are not appropriate for mountain walking so please do not bring these for trekking.
- **Waterproof jacket and trousers** – both essential items, should be as light as possible (not insulated: your other layers should provide the insulation). Please ensure that you do not need to remove your walking boots in order to put on your waterproof trousers.
- **Socks**
- **Underwear**
- **Trekking trousers** – bring something lightweight.
- **Shorts**
- **T-shirts** – wicking t-shirts are better than cotton as they are lighter and dry faster.
- **Mid layer** - fleece jacket is good
- **Warm jacket** – We recommend bringing a lightweight synthetic belay jacket (eg. Rab Photon / Arcteryx Atom / Patagonia Nano) – just in case it gets cold. Remember, you are carrying this in your rucksack so it should be as light as possible. You don't normally need to bring a down jacket because it won't be much use if it gets wet.
- **Warm hat** - lightweight woolly hat is fine
- **Gloves** - we recommend bringing 2-3 pairs. A light liner pair are good for most of the trip. Then a pair of waterproof gloves such as Seal Skinz can be very useful in bad weather. And a warmer pair of gloves can be essential if it snows.
- **Sun Hat**
- **Sunglasses**
- **Suncream** (small bottle to save weight)
- **Lip protection** (with sun screen)
- **Water bottles / camelback** – you should have the capacity to carry at least 2 litres of water, but on very hot days you could need 3L.
- **Walking poles** – These often go in the “optional” section, but if there is snow, they are essential.
- **Sheet sleeping bag** – only needed for any nights in a mountain refuge (duvets or blankets are provided). Silk is best, it's lighter than cotton.
- **Travel towel** – again, only needed for the mountain refuges – the hotels provide towels.
- **Wash kit** – Bring whatever you like for wash kit - but for any refuge nights where you have to carry it, small bottles will be perfect: you would normally just take a toothbrush, travel size toothpaste, mini contact lens solution if applicable, a couple of wet wipes and a tiny travel soap.
- **Head torch** – just a lightweight torch, such as a Petzl Tikka / Zipka is fine for this trip.
- **Plastic bags / dry sacks** to keep essentials dry.
- **Passport** – to be carried whilst trekking. Make sure you keep it dry.
- **Cash** – for packed lunches and any drinks whilst on the trip
- **Credit card** - for emergencies
- **Basic first aid kit** – your leader will carry a large first aid kit, but you should bring a small first aid kit containing plasters, blister treatment, painkillers & diarrhea treatment (rehydration sachets & immodium)

Optional items:

- **Thermal base layer**
- **Long johns / thermal leggings**
- **Buff** – can be useful for extra warmth if it's cold, or sun protection for your neck on a hot day
- **Camera**
- **Book**
- **Lightweight sandals / flip flops** – whilst these are usually provided at the mountain refuges, they aren't provided in the hotels, so it's really nice to have footwear to change into in the evening
- **Hiking Trainers** – it can be nice to give your feet a break from your walking boots on some days. Your leader can advise on which days this might be suitable, and if you are thinking of doing this, your shoes must be suitable for trekking in!

- **Mobile phone** – there is phone reception for the majority of the trip. It is a good idea to have a phone in case of emergency or if you need to leave the group for any reason.
- **Umbrella**
- **Earplugs**
- **Snacks** – not essential as we do go past shops most days so you can top up your supply of snacks fairly regularly
- **Antibacterial handwash**
- **Insect repellent**
- **Swimwear** - some of the hotels have a swimming pool, spa or sauna
- **Boot dryers** - not many places on the trip have drying rooms, so since I discovered these, I don't go anywhere without them: <https://www.sidas.com/en/products/204-drywarmer.html>
- **Travel kettle, mug & tea bags / coffee** - it is unusual for hotels in continental Europe to provide tea and coffee-making facilities in the rooms
- **External battery pack** - for charging your phone in a hut
- **Flask** - we do try to have regular tea and coffee stops, but a flask can be a comfort on bad weather days

A note about the kit:

Most of the time the weather is warm, usually fairly stable, and most people don't need too much extra kit to see them through the trip.

However, **you must bring all of the items on our essential list**. At least once per summer we experience unseasonal conditions that really do make every item on the above list essential. **If you do not have the correct kit, you can put yourself and others at risk of hypothermia**, and our guide may ask you to leave the trip until you have purchased the necessary kit.

Every year we experience unseasonal snow at least once. It can also rain very heavily and temperatures can go from being in the mid 30s celcius (96 F) one week, to below zero (32 F) the next.

So, if it rains, you *will* need waterproof jackets AND trousers, and will be glad of several pairs of gloves. If it snows, you *will* need decent hiking boots (NOT hiking trainers), walking poles, warm clothes and warm hat and gloves. It's also essential that you can put your waterproof trousers on without removing your boots.

It is also possible to experience several weeks of heatwave at a time - if this happens, you will likely get through numerous sachets of rehydration salts and will need to be carrying 3-4L of water, and a sun hat will be absolutely essential.

Note that this is not meant to alarm you - most of the time we enjoy stable weather and are in shorts and t-shirts - we just want to make sure that your trip isn't ruined if you come unprepared - we'd far rather you have extra kit and don't need it, than the other way round.