

England: The Cornwall Coast

Tour-Only Itinerary

Subtropical beaches might not be the first thing you think of when picturing England, but Cornwall is full of surprises. On this self-guided adventure, we'll show you where to look along the turquoise waters of the Cornish coast to find smooth beaches, sultry palm trees, incredible seafood, and other unexpected delights. Discover Cornwall in style—staying in high-end seaside hotels with beautifully manicured English gardens and spectacular coastal views. Walk along the scenic coastline—guided by our convenient audio navigation app and detailed route notes. With the flexibility to choose your own adventure, you might decide to pause for an authentic English cream tea, discover Pendennis Castle, or explore St. Michael's Mount along the way. With 24/7 local support, you can relax and let your cares simply wash away with the tide.



Highlights

- Follow the breathtaking trails of Cornwall's South West Coast Path, a long-established and celebrated walking trail.
- Savor the simplicity of fresh Cornish cuisine infused with creative flair at some of Cornwall's finest restaurants.
- Enjoy the magnificent beauty, rural ambiance, and unhurried pace of Cornwall's stunning Roseland Peninsula.
- Discover the charming seaside town of St. Ives, whose landscape has inspired artists for hundreds of years.
- Follow a cobblestone path accessible only at low tide to the island of St. Michael's Mount, where

an ancient castle and monastery await.

On all Self-Guided Adventures you can count on ...



A local representative available 24/7.



Gracious accommodations that are a clean, comfortable home away from home.



Detailed maps & route notes featuring turn-by-turn directions and places of interest.



Experts to handle all the details, including moving your luggage between hotels while you're out exploring.



Scheduled taxi transfers to bring you to and from each day's walks.



Access to a Self-Guided Flight Concierge—ask our knowledgeable team to find flights that sync with your planned trip.



Delicious meals—many are included.

Activity Level

This tour is one of our Self-Guided Walking Adventures, rated easy to moderate, with an average of 6 to 9 miles per day and limited options; while walks typically are not able to be shortened, it is possible to travel with your luggage to your next accommodation on any given day (included in the price of the tour). These mainly exposed coastal walks go from the shore level to the top of headlands and back down to the coast, with elevation gains and losses up to 900 feet. The terrain includes trails that are sandy, rocky, or packed earth with some loose stones or gravel, as well as farming and dirt roads, and occasionally a paved

country road. As many walks bring you through open pastures, it's important to be comfortable around livestock (sheep, cows, horses) and to be prepared for muddy conditions in wet weather. Cornwall's appealing scenery ranges from far-reaching Atlantic vistas from cliff tops that plunge to tiny coves, to long sandy beaches with crashing waves and sand dunes backed by low hills with prehistoric remains of habitation, as well as mining sites and medieval chapels. A favorite British seaside destination, Cornwall's picturesque fishing villages and port towns have a long tradition as communities for artists, attracted here by the unique light, the land- and seascapes, and the surprisingly lush and subtropical vegetation. Remember: preparation is the key to ensuring your tour readiness; the more you walk or participate in aerobic exercise prior to your trip, the more you will enjoy your experience!

DAY 1

Your England: The Cornwall Coast tour begins

Make your own way to the railway station at Par, a small town with a busy working port, located nearly halfway down the southern coast of Cornwall. Upon arrival, a taxi brings you about 15 minutes to Fowey, an old fishing village on an estuary of the River Fowey. With its location at the end of the Saint's Way, a long-distance Cornwall walking path, the town is a gateway into the South Coast's designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Take time to explore the narrow streets of the Old Town, alive with seaside ambiance and maritime history and lined with beautiful medieval and Georgian buildings. Visit the shops, galleries, and tearooms, and stroll the Town Quay, perhaps stopping to visit the Fowey Aquarium or the Fowey Museum. At the museum, you can view the collection of writer Daphne du Maurier, the town's most famous resident. Later, meet our local representative for an orientation meeting. Dinner is included tonight at the hotel, giving you a chance to sample the town's renowned Fowey River oysters, local scallops, West Country meats, and Cornish cheeses.

Included Meals: Dinner

DAY 2

The National Trust Hall Walk. Stay Put Day

5.6 miles, easy to moderate, 750-ft. elevation gain and loss

Wake up to a cooked-to-order Cornish breakfast this morning, then set out on a loop walk with the aid of

two ferries. There'll be ample opportunities to shop for refreshments and lunch on your own. From Fowey, embark a five-minute ferry at Caffa Mill and cross the harbor to Bodinnick. As you arrive, you have views of "Ferryside," the waterfront house where Daphne du Maurier wrote her first novel in 1928. Today, her son and his family occupy the house. Up a steep, short hill, you see the sign for the National Trust Hall Walk. Follow the mostly level footpath into a lightly wooded area blanketed with heath, gorse, and wildflower, pausing to take in charming views of Fowey town, and the River Fowey and its estuary. Later, you'll pass the "Q" Monument, a memorial to the Cornish writer Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch. The prolific novelist is mostly remembered for compiling the gigantic volume, *The Oxford Book of English Verse, 1250-1900*.

Continue through more coastal woodland past hedges bright with primrose, perhaps catching the scent of wild garlic. Nearby is a place where, in 1644, a musket shot narrowly missed King Charles I during the English Civil War. Later, arrive in the small harbor town of Pont, situated at the head of Pont Pill creek. Once a busy quay full of barges, the river silted up over time. This picturesque region, sometimes graced by the majestic grey heron, inspired Kenneth Grahame, author of *The Wind in the Willows*. Your trail then leads to St. Wyllow's church, also known as Lanteglos church. Dedicated to a reclusive Irish-born saint who was beheaded by locals, it was (more happily!) the site of Daphne du Maurier's wedding in 1932.

Your route continues into the fields adjacent to pretty Lantic Bay. The coastal path from here features a 390-foot climb to Blackbottle before you proceed on a mostly downhill track to Polruan. This attractive, sheltered harbor town was once a tiny fishing village and later transformed into a boat-building center. Here, you catch the ferry back to Fowey. For centuries, the crossing was completed by rowboat; passengers could save on their fare if they worked the oars themselves!

This evening, stroll the inviting streets of Fowey, lined with lovely shops and restaurants. For dinner on your own, savor the fresh catch of Cornwall: mussels caught just offshore, seafood hauled in that very day, or lobster or crab netted hours earlier. Complemented by the produce of the surrounding farms, your meal tonight—and those throughout your journey—will be memorable indeed.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 3

South West Coast Path: Portscatho to Place; ferry to St. Mawes. Move

on Day

6.6 miles, easy to moderate, 450-ft. elevation gain and 500-ft. elevation loss

After breakfast, you drive via taxi about an hour to Portscatho, once renowned for its pilchard, or sardine, fishing. This seaside village is beautifully set on the Roseland Peninsula, one of the most stunning areas of the coast and part of Cornwall's Area of Outstanding Beauty. This seldom-visited region is squared off by hedgerows and hushed lanes, dotted with tranquil villages and sandy bays, and blanketed with lush, gentle terrain.

Today is a full day of walking the South West Coast Path along the breathtaking Roseland Peninsula. In Portscatho, fuel up with a pastry and tea and pick up ingredients for a picnic lunch that you can enjoy later at a scenic spot. Then begin your walk by tracing the cliff tops above a rocky shore to Towan Beach. Perhaps stop for a refreshment, then walk the headlands at Killigerran and Porthmellin through open fields and farmland to remote Porthbeor Beach. If it's low tide, you can have a soak in the refreshing tidal pools. Later, from the dense scrub of Zone Point, continue south, keeping watch for seals and their pups off the coast. Porpoises and dolphins have also been seen in these waters. At St. Anthony's Head, the southernmost point of the peninsula and a National Trust site, take in sweeping views of the entrance to Falmouth Harbor, the deepest natural harbor in Western Europe. This is the Fal Estuary, the world's third-largest natural harbor and home to a vast array of birdlife. You may detour to St. Anthony's Lighthouse if you'd like; the 1835 tower boasted the largest bell in Cornwall until it was replaced by a foghorn. Follow a trail to a World War II battery and camp, restored and managed by the National Trust. Avid birders may follow a path to a bird hide, from where you can watch for Goldeneye and Red-breasted Merganser diving duck, colonies of fulmars, flocks of gannets, and shags and cormorants.

Continue along the Coast Path, summiting the headland at Amsterdam Point before descending to Cellars Beach. A woodland path then leads you to Place, a quaint seaside hamlet where you will find the Place House, a lovely country estate, and the adjacent ferry terminal for your 10-minute crossing to St. Mawes. Hugging the mouth of the Percuil River, this was an important port during medieval days and remains home to the best-preserved of Henry VIII's fortresses. Enjoy the rest of the day to settle in and explore the pretty town's numerous galleries and shops. Dinner is included at the hotel.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 4

Loop walk from St. Mawes to St. Just in Roseland OR ferry and loop walk from Falmouth to Maenporth. Stay Put Day

6.2 miles, easy to moderate, 400-ft. elevation gain and loss OR 8.8 miles, easy to moderate, 700-ft. elevation gain and loss

The charms of St. Mawes are endless. Rows of whitewashed and pastel houses and cob cottages look out over the water from narrow hilly streets, as colorful sailing vessels dot a sheltered bay. Its gloriously preserved, clover-leaf-shaped castle was built in the mid-1600s, along with Pendennis Castle across the estuary, to defend England from possible invasion by France, Spain, and the Pope. The fortress retains much of its Tudor style and is a delight to explore. And you may do so at your own expense (approximately £7.50 per person) if you wish, regardless of the walk you choose today.

Your first option traces the Percuil River on a footpath through the bluebell woods of Bosloggas. A National Trust trail points you through the fields of Tregear Vean, grazing land marked by many stiles and gates. This pathway follows a high ridge from which you enjoy breathtaking vistas of the estuary and the sea. Take it all in at a relaxed pace, then arrive at St. Just in Roseland, called by many “the most beautiful churchyard on earth.” Its setting is sublime, nestled among semi-tropical shrubs and trees along a tidal creek. You’ll want to spend time strolling the winding walkways lined with bamboo trees and other tropical plantings and admiring the colorful canvas of snowdrops, hydrangeas, marigolds, heather, and countless other flowers. The church, too, is a wonder, a 13th-century treasure. After a picnic lunch or cream tea here, you return to St. Mawes via the banks of the Fal River estuary, an area known as Carrick Roads to locals. You traverse more than a dozen fields kept by the National Trust, glancing across the waters to Pendennis Castle and Falmouth, the latter with its busy shipyard. St. Mawes Castle welcomes you back to your home base.

If you prefer, take the ferry to Falmouth, a town rich in nautical history. News of Admiral Nelson’s death at Trafalgar first landed on England’s shores here in 1805, and Charles Darwin disembarked the HMS *Beagle* at this port in 1836. Upon arrival, you have the chance to absorb the maritime ambiance of the city as you follow streets inland, perhaps stopping to browse the works at an art gallery or peruse the fascinating exhibits at the National Maritime Museum. Leave city streets behind for the fertile Cornish farmland and cross open fields as you make your way to Maenporth. Pause here to relax on its wide sandy cove before following the South West Coast Path, a gentle hike across flat seafront that affords access to

beaches at Swanpool and Gyllyngvase, each separated by a small headland. An uphill path delivers you to Pendennis Point and its historic castle, brother to St. Mawes Castle across the estuary. After exploring this impressive citadel (at your own expense; approximately £12.50 per person), return to the ferry terminal for your return trip to St. Mawes.

You may instead follow your own whims today, free of an agenda. Explore St. Mawes Castle, or ferry over to Falmouth to explore its cultural and historic riches. Visit Pendennis Castle and find the ideal spot for lunch, whether a traditional deli, pub, or a waterside café.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 5

South West Coast Path: Praa Sands to Marazion; St. Michael's Mount. Move on Day

6.2 miles, easy to moderate, 550-ft. elevation gain and loss

Taxi to the surfing village of Praa Sands this morning. Part of your one-hour journey requires a crossing on the King Harry Ferry, one of only five chain ferries still operating in England and an icon of Cornwall's heritage. At a beachside pub, you set out into another of the county's Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, with sandy beaches, tiny coves, and dramatic cliffs.

Follow the South West Coast Path uphill to round Hoe Point, where it undulates over clifftops along a patchwork of fields. At the rugged inlet of Pesreath Cove, admire the tiny beach below and traverse a scrub-lined trail to the larger Kenneggy Sands beach and the historic Prussia Cove. This cove was home to the notorious 18th-century ship wrecker and smuggler John Carter, nicknamed the King of Prussia. Notice the cave entrances covered in bricks as you walk; the grottoes were reportedly once used to store contraband. In 1947, the HMS *Warspite* (called "the ship that refused to die") ran aground here as she was being towed to land at the end of her career. Today, Prussia Cove (which actually comprises four coves: Coule's, King's, Bessy's, and Piskies) is a peaceful and breathtaking stretch of coast. It also serves as an inspiration to students of the International Musicians Seminar, which occupies a scenically perched Art Nouveau building.

Take your time today and enjoy the secluded beauty of this stunning series of coves. Hike the steep steps

down to the tiny pebble beach of Bessy's Cove. Skirt around to Piskies Cove and admire the sandy shore and the varied blue shades of its water. Climb to the narrow headland of Cudden Point, where you might spot a seal colony. At this impressive height, you get your first spectacular views of St. Michael's Mount, rising offshore in the distance, in the shape of a wedding cake.

Stackhouse and Trevean coves follow as you continue along the rugged coast dotted with gorse and scrub, tracing walking trails and vehicle tracks. Pause at Perran Sands to renew and refresh in the water and perhaps have lunch. Before getting underway again, explore the quaint village of Perranuthnoe, home to a small, Norman-style church dedicated to the patron saint of Cornwall, St. Piran. And pass what could be the oldest recorded inn of Cornwall, a now-Victorian building with roots dating to the 12th century.

Return to the flat fields squared by Cornish hedges, native tamarisk, and boulders. These sheltered parcels, mild climate, and fertile soil are ideal for flower farming. Head around Basore Point and rocky Ternow Cove before turning inland to the ancient market town of Marazion. An active artist community of painters and potters, it claims to be England's oldest settlement.

This afternoon, you can explore the fascinating scenery and history of "The Mount," viewing it from the shore, walking out to the tidal island at low tide, or crossing by boat. Originally, it had Benedictine connections to Mont Saint-Michel in Brittany; its monastic buildings date to the 12th century. Historical clues suggest the island was a tin port in prehistoric times, and it may even have been mentioned by the Romans and Greeks. By 1424, the connection with the French island monastery ended, and it passed through the hands of various aristocratic landowners over the centuries. Now, the Mount is managed by Britain's National Trust, with a 999-year lease held by the St. Aubyn family.

This evening, a 20-minute taxi ride delivers you to your inn in the picture-perfect fishing village of Mousehole, described by the poet Dylan Thomas as "the loveliest village in England." Enjoy dinner at your inn or in town.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 6

South West Coast Path: Zennor to St. Ives OR loop walk from Mousehole to Lamorna Cove. Stay Put Day

6.5 miles, moderate, 600-ft. elevation gain and 900-ft. elevation loss OR 5 miles, easy to moderate, 500-ft. elevation gain and loss

After another hearty breakfast, choose again from two walking options. Maybe the most outstanding walk in Cornwall, the first (more challenging) option begins with a taxi ride to the little village of Zennor, set above high, rocky cliffs amid boulder-strewn hills and moors. The granite here was quarried to build parts of St. Ives and the walls of Falmouth Harbor. You set out into this romantic, brooding landscape at the Tinnars Arms, the town's only pub. Zennor's 1150 Norman church is notable for its medieval carvings of the Mermaid of Zennor, who is said to have lured a local parish singer into the sea, never to be seen again. During World War I, this was also home to D.H. Lawrence, who praised Zennor's setting as "lovelier than the Mediterranean."

Your footfalls first lead you along the South West Coast Path around Zennor Head. Though its granite cliffs soar 200 feet from the sea, the head's highest point is an impressive 314 feet. The head was mined for copper in the Victorian Age. Cornwall still boasts about 30,000 miles of stone-based hedges, most of them established in ancient times. Some of them are here on Zennor Head and they reveal much about the area's 6,000-year-old Bronze Age farming system. Lands here are still farmed responsibly to preserve wildlife and historic Neolithic features.

Continue along a fairly rigorous footpath, plunging down towering cliffs to splendid coves, and then climb to the next head. Expect to do some boulder scrambling during this segment. At Mussel Point, your halfway mark, take in the magnificent views of rugged cliffs and perhaps pause for a picnic. Off shore, admire the rocky islands known as The Carracks and Little Carracks, the Cornish word for "rocks." You might spot grey seals on the largest of them. Your route from here levels out a bit, following cliffs, grassland, and heathland to Porthmeor Beach, the premier beach of St. Ives and one of Cornwall's finest. Its long golden sands, overseen by artists' studios, take the full force of the Atlantic surf, flanked as it is by rugged headlands. There'll be time to explore St. Ives, a quaint seaside resort, with its many craft shops and galleries. If you wish, wander into the narrow lanes to visit the satellite Tate Gallery here, or the Hepworth Collection, before being driven back to your inn.

Today's second (easy-to-moderate) walk option begins and ends at the historical harbor front in Mousehole. Once a busy port crowded with fishing boats landing pilchards, today, Mousehole is one of the most charming harbor villages in the country. Its cobbled streets wind down toward a tiny stone harbor

scattered with net-stacked fishing boats, ringed by small shops, galleries, and pubs crafted from finely grained Lamorna granite. Join the South West Coast Path at the southern end of the village and follow it along the edge of weather-beaten cliffs, over exposed fields, and through the shaded tree tunnels of the Kemyel Crease Nature Reserve, a conifer plantation sloping down to the sea. Shortly after rounding the headland of Carn Du with its panoramic views, you arrive in the tiny hamlet of Lamorna Cove, clustered around the shimmering sea. Apart from the natural beauty of this small cove, Lamorna is perhaps best known for the Post-Impressionist artists who came to stay here in the early part of the 20th century. There are still many artists and crafters living in the area around Lamorna today whose works may be found in several of the area's potteries and galleries. Pause for lunch or a refreshment at the seaside café or the traditional pub just a short walk inland. The return route to Mousehole loops through the Lamorna granite quarries and across the fields of the clifftop farms overlooking St Clement's Isle and St Michael's Mount. Enjoy a final farewell dinner on your own.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 7

***Your England: The Cornwall Coast* tour concludes**

After a sumptuous breakfast, a taxi ride of about 10–15 minutes delivers you to the Penzance train station, where your tour concludes.

Included Meals: Breakfast

What's Included

Tour Only

Air Package

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| Boutique accommodations | ✓ | ✓ |
| 8 on-tour meals: 6 breakfasts and 2 dinners | ✓ | ✓ |
| Ride with GPS (custom downloadable GPS route notes and turn-by-turn voice navigation; smartphone required) | ✓ | ✓ |
| Orientation meeting with a Country Walkers representative | ✓ | ✓ |
| Local representative available 24/7 | ✓ | ✓ |
| Scheduled on-tour taxi and luggage transportation (Please note: If unable to walk, it is possible to travel with your luggage from one accommodation to the next at no additional charge.) | ✓ | ✓ |
| Roundtrip international airfare | | ✓ |
| Business-class upgrades available | | ✓ |
| One extra night in Fowey and one extra night in London | | ✓ |
| Pre- and post-tour breakfasts | | ✓ |
| Detailed information for your independent travel to/from arrival and departure airports | | ✓ |