



TRAVEL

Cornwall & The Headland Hotel

Located in the far west of Great Britain on a peninsula tumbling into the vast Atlantic ocean, almost completely surrounded by the sea, a magnificent coastline wraps around Cornwall for almost 300 miles. Cornwall is also the location of mainland Great Britain's most southerly promontory, The Lizard, and one of the UK's most westerly points, Land's End, while a few miles offshore and even further west, is an archipelago of tiny islands that make up the Isles of Scilly.

There are lots of things Cornwall is loved for; the dramatic coastline with its captivating fishing harbours; the spectacular beaches and the pounding surf that provide a natural playground for a variety of watersports; and of course the Cornish pasty and cream teas.

But there are also lots of things about Cornwall that may surprise you. For instance, the wilderness of captivating Bodmin Moor with its panorama of big skies, fascinating prehistoric remains, great walking trails, and more than its fair share of local legends.

There's also the dynamic art scene found mainly in West Cornwall, inspired by the naturally stunning landscape.

More recently, Cornwall has become known for a food scene to rival London and beyond; Cornwall now has a multitude of award-winning local food producers and stellar chefs putting the region well and truly on the gourmet map.

Cornwall also has a tremendous history based on its Celtic roots; its Celtic Cornish culture; the warmth and friendliness of the people; and the Cornish language that can be seen in the village names.

In the far west where the sea turns turquoise in the sun, the sand is white and the natural light is sometimes blindingly bright, the land is adorned with a legacy of Bronze age standing stones, huge granite burial chambers, Celtic crosses and holy wells.

In the old industrial heartland, the landscape,

recently awarded World Heritage Site status, is dotted with the fascinating remnants of a triumphant mining past, illustrating Cornwall's enormous contribution to the Industrial Revolution with engine houses, museums and miles of recreational trails.

Around the coastline Cornwall's maritime legacy is never far away, where local fishermen land their daily catch of fresh seafood and tall ships, luggers and ketches unfurl their sails in the Cornish breeze.

The natural environment, recognised nationally across the twelve sections of the Cornwall Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, is accessed by the spectacular South West Coast Path providing walkers with miles of gentle strolls and challenging hikes.

Cornwall's beaches are rated among the best in the UK and even the world. Thanks to its unique position on the UK's South West peninsula, 80% of Cornwall is surrounded by the sea with the longest stretch of coastline in the UK at 476km.

Sennen (Whitsand Bay)

A short walk over the cliffs from Land's End, Sennen is a charming fishing cove with a long, sandy beach that offers excellent swimming and consistent surf. At low tide the beach joins up with its neighbour to provide over a mile of golden sand, so that even on hot summer days it is usually possible to find plenty of space to spread out. There are a couple of cafés, the Old Success pub and two surf shops within easy walking distance of the car park. Surf lessons and board hire are available and the beach is patrolled by lifeguards during the summer months. www.cornwall-beaches.co.uk/west-cornwall/sennen.htm

Godrevy Beach

The northernmost and most dramatic section of the three-mile long sandy beach that stretches

from Hayle to Godrevy Head. Godrevy takes the brunt of the Atlantic swell and is one of the more exposed beaches on the north coast, holding big swells and yielding a rugged splendour on a stormy winter's day. The beach terminates with a low rocky headland that offers great views of Godrevy lighthouse, which was the real-life inspiration for Virginia Woolfe's novel 'To The Lighthouse'. There is an excellent café in the National Trust car park located just behind the dunes. www.cornwall-beaches.co.uk/north-coast/godrevy.htm

Praa Sands Beach

Praa Sands is a medium-sized sandy beach located on the more sheltered south coast between Perranuthnoe and Porthleven. Popular with surfers, especially beginners, Praa Sands works best with a southerly swell and a northerly wind. In summer the sea is usually flat, making Praa Sands an excellent choice for swimmers and children. There are plenty of facilities, including shops, cafés and toilets, and several camp sites within easy walking distance of the beach. www.cornwall-beaches.co.uk/west-cornwall/praa-sands.htm

Perranporth (Penhale Sands)

Perranporth has the feel of a typical seaside holiday village, buzzing with shops, cafés and pubs. The beach, which stretches two miles at low tide, features decent surf and a natural open air swimming pool that fills with seawater at high tide, which is then warmed by the sun during the day. The more accessible, southern end of the beach can get very crowded in summer, but the crowds can be easily avoided by a short walk away from the village in the direction of Penhale Sands. Perranporth is patrolled by lifeguards in summer, who usually designate two safe swimming areas. www.cornwall-beaches.co.uk/north-coast/perranporth.htm



Marazion Beach

Marazion lies at the far end of a long expanse of pebbly sand that stretches all the way back to Penzance. At the Marazion end the beach is backed by dunes and faces the iconic St Michael's Mount, accessible via a causeway that is exposed at low tide. A place of moods, the south-facing beach switches from being calm and sheltered and perfect for families to receiving the brunt of strong southerly gales, making it popular with windsurfers. The sand gives way to rocky coves at the town end of the beach, where facilities abound in what is considered to be one of the oldest towns in England. www.cornwall-beaches.co.uk/west-cornwall/marazion.htm

Porthmeor Beach

Porthmeor, the most westerly of the beaches in St Ives, is one of the few in Penwith that has full protection from the prevailing south westerly winds. A curving, sandy bay that picks up plenty

of swell, Porthmeor is popular with surfers and usually offers a number of peaks that cater to all abilities. Overlooked by the imposing Tate gallery and with former artist's studios (now holiday flats) backing right onto the beach, Porthmeor has plenty of character and is well served by a café, beach huts and a small car park. It is only a short walk from the centre of St Ives. www.cornwall-beaches.co.uk/west-cornwall/porthmeor.htm

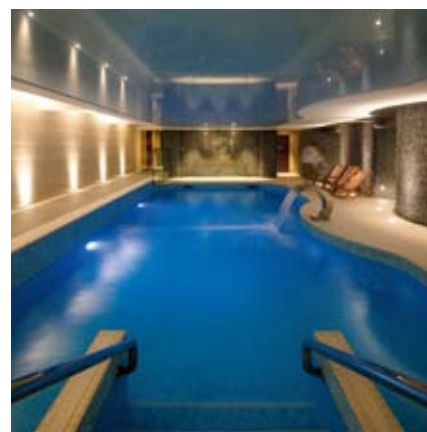
Kynance Cove

It is easy to see why Kynance Cove, located two miles from Lizard point, is one of the most photographed beaches in Cornwall. White sand, brilliant turquoise water, islands, caves and stunning serpentine rock formations all serve to make this one of the prettiest places around. Popular since Victorian times, Kynance Cove has recently been made more accessible, thanks to a National Trust toll road and car park. It is still at least half an hour from anywhere, however,

which makes checking the very inconsistent but occasionally good surf something of a mission. www.cornwall-beaches.co.uk/helston-lizard-falmouth/kynance-cove.htm

Porthcurno Beach

Porthcurno beach is truly stunning. Nestled among tall granite cliffs, the beach is part of a wider bay that opens up at low tide to reveal a curve of golden sand that stretches from the Minack Theatre to the Logan Rock, site of an Iron Age cliff castle. Located just around the corner from Land's End, Porthcurno has long been the place where telecommunications cables arrive from America, and they can still sometimes be seen poking up through the sand. Porthcurno picks up more swell than other beaches further up the south coast, which can translate into good surf on a big low tide, although the waves tend to be fast and hollow and unsuitable for beginners. Porthcurno beach is easily accessible and popular with families,



although at high tide a steep shelf means that swimming can be dangerous. The beach faces south and is backed by steep cliffs, which offer good protection from northerly winds. www.cornwall-beaches.co.uk/west-cornwall/porthcurno.htm

Harlyn Bay

Harlyn, on the north coast near Padstow, is a spacious, sandy beach, popular with families and surfers. The coast path crosses the beach on its way to the famous Bedruthan Steps, although care should be taken at high tide as the sand can be almost completely covered. Lifeguards patrol the beach in summer, making it a safe swimming option, while winter storm swells can bring good quality waves, nicely protected from south westerly gales. A large car park above the beach and some basic toilets are the only facilities. Dogs are welcome on the beach all year round. www.cornwall-beaches.co.uk/north-coast/harlyn-bay.htm

Mawgan Porth Beach

Mawgan Porth, just four miles north of Newquay and the closest place to Newquay airport, is a small village with a big sandy beach that offers a welcome respite to anyone who can't quite handle Newquay's crowds. The beach is in a large sheltered bay at the bottom of steep cliffs, with numerous rock pools and caves to explore. It also picks up plenty of Atlantic swell, making it popular with families and surfers alike. The village, although not overly commercial, offers a good selection of places to eat, drink and sleep. www.cornwall-beaches.co.uk/north-coast/mawgan-porth.htm

The Eden Project

With a worldwide reputation, and recognised by the British Travel Awards as the Best UK Leisure Attraction 4 years running (2014, 2013, 2012 and 2011), The Eden Project barely needs an introduction, but this epic destination definitely deserves a day of your undivided attention.

More than just a huge, tropical garden, Eden is a gateway into the relationships between plants and people, and a fascinating insight into the story of mankind's dependence on plant life. Not only a mind-blowing visitor attraction, Eden is also fast-becoming a unique resource for education and knowledge towards a sustainable future.

Experience the sights, smells and scale of the rainforests in the Rainforest Biome - the world's largest greenhouse - and discover the tropical plants that are used to produce everyday products. Travel to South Africa and California, as you amble amongst the orange and lemon trees, olive groves and gnarled vines of the Mediterranean Biome, and in the 30-acre Outdoor Garden see hemp, sunflowers and other plants that could change your future, flourishing under the Cornish sun.

A fascinating location, but, more importantly, Eden is a fun and family-friendly day out. Curious kids can find out where tea, rubber and sugar come from, and travel the world to the simulated environments of tropical destinations that



they dream of travelling to in the future. There are themed events according to the seasons, workshops for adults and children, activity days, music concerts and much more besides.

There's no stress about packing up a family survival kit - facilities include on-site restaurants and cafés, gift shops and well equipped child- and baby-friendly toilet facilities. In fact, for a day out you needn't worry about taking much more than yourselves. Eden also offers easy access to wheelchairs and buggies, and dogs on leads are welcome in all the outdoor areas of the site.

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Falmouth

During our visit to Cornwall, we stopped in Falmouth, one of the larger towns that has a long high street full of restaurants, bars and shops where you can buy clothes and souvenirs. We chose to eat in The Lookout, a charming restaurant that offers Tapas from around the world, with a great view of the sea and an outdoor terrace. The food was delicious, nicely presented, and great value for money, and the restaurant also offer teas, coffees and delicious looking cakes.

Newquay & The Headland Hotel

We spent the last two nights of our Cornish tour in The Headland Hotel's self-catering cottages in Newquay, which are perfectly appointed with en-suite bathrooms, a fully equipped kitchen and comfortable lounge areas and bedrooms. The Headland also welcomes four legged friends, with two beautiful dog sculptures in the lobby, where a dog water bowl can be found for our thirsty canine friends.

On arrival at The Headland, we were taken to a modern area within the hotel grounds, which sites various fairly new self-catering cottages. One of The Headland's many charming employees greeted us at our car, and placed all our luggage in a massive basket on four wheels, and led us to our private courtyard and front door. Within our private courtyard was a table

and chairs, for those brave enough to sit outside, as the winds are usually fairly strong in this part of Newquay, and inside the properties are deck chairs that can be taken to your private terrace, or, as we did, wheeled in the basket to the 'pods' as we called them, which are areas in the hill on the side of the hotel that have been created out of stone to act as wind shields, and have a fabulous view of Fistral Beach and the sea.

The hotel's facilities are great for couples and families alike, with an indoor pool and jacuzzi, gym, a spa that offers many treatments, including the Hot Stone Massage that I enjoyed during our stay, whilst my friend enjoyed a facial and back massage, and the relaxation room we were led to after our treatments was so comfortable I nearly fell asleep!

Outdoor activities include tennis (the hotel has 3 well maintained hard courts), a fun 9 hole pitch and put course which we played twice, an outdoor swimming pool surrounded by deck chairs and glass to prevent the wind from reducing the temperature by quite a few degrees (!), and walks around the cliff top.

The Headland is situated on the top of a hill, with Fistral Beach just to its left. This beach is a lovely, sandy beach, full of surfers enjoying the waves, and quite often hosts surfing, kite surfing and jet ski tournaments, as well as being an area for many who are learning the sport from scratch. There is also a Rick Stein fish restaurant, pizza restaurant, bars and shops just to the side of Fistral Beach, which takes less than a minute to reach from the hotel, offering eating options if you are staying at The Headland for a while and would like a change from the main dining room or Terrace Restaurant.

The Headland Hotel is a Victorian hotel, with amazing Victorian architecture, and an oldy, worldly feel in reception, the lounge and dining room, but also has a modern element to it with the spa which was renovated a couple of years ago, and the Terrace restaurant and bar.

Even though we were staying in one of the cottages, we ate breakfast in the hotel as well as having dinner there one night. Breakfast comprises cereals, breads, and a hot buffet, as well as à la carte options, including pancakes, haddock and scrambled eggs, and a full traditional breakfast, although this can also be found in the buffet area.

Dinner was taken in front of the large glass windows, overlooking the beautiful blue sea, and was very reasonably priced. We chose Scallops and Mussels for starters, and the mussels were the largest I have ever seen, along with Fillet Steak as mains and delicious ice cream and sorbet for dessert.

The staff at The Headland are superb with nothing being too much trouble, we thoroughly enjoyed our two night stay so much that we are already planning our return visit next year!

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