



↑ Former tin-mine engine house near Chapel Porth in North Cornwall.

of mining. Set near the base of cliffs, the Crowns engine houses at Botallack cut striking figures. Levant Mine was one of the most successful mines in Cornwall, and copper, tin, and arsenic were extracted there; today its 1860s steam-powered beam engine can still be seen.

Overlooked by mining buildings and cliffs covered by heathland that is painted yellow and purple by gorse and heather from late summer, Chapel Porth is a beach of note on a trail that includes a plethora of sandy stretches. This National Trust site is home to birds such as rock pipits, and there are small caves that can be visited at low tide.

The show of color continues on the Lizard peninsula, an area featuring the southernmost point on mainland Britain, Lizard Point. In the region, hikers will notice serpentine, deep-green rock with lines of red and white running through it. In the 1800s, the stone was polished and was used for diverse purposes, including for fireplaces. On the strenuous 16.7 km (10.4 mi.) walk from the Lizard to Coverack, there are also stiles made from the rock. Walkers should be careful, though—these look attractive but are very slippery when wet.

Towns on the route have characteristics as varied as the path's natural aspects: St Ives, which was once home to painters such as Barbara Hepworth and Ben Nicholson, remains a

In over 1,000 km (621 mi.), it takes in ancient geological features and a range of flora and fauna while immersing travelers in the history of the region.

destination for art enthusiasts today; Padstow, a working fishing port, has become renowned for its food culture; and Exeter, a large city, is the home of a fine Gothic cathedral. Planning in a few extra days to explore towns and villages in more detail is highly recommended.

The South West Coast Path gives walkers of any ability a taste of England's history, nature, and geology, and shows how all three are intertwined. Whether rock pooling at the edges of long expanses of sand, marveling at red-and-white striped lighthouses on rocky outcrops, or trekking rugged coastline and gorse-lined tracks, hikers of all abilities will find one or more activity to suit on this diverse trail.

GOOD TO KNOW

START/FINISH

- 📍 Minehead, Somerset
- 📍 Poole, Dorset

SEASON

Year-round

ACCOMMODATION

Holiday cottages, hotels, hostels, B&Bs, campsites.

HIGHLIGHTS

Durdle Door rock arch, Isle of Portland, Chapel Porth Beach, Jurassic Coast, and the Cornish Mining World Heritage sites.

TIP

As the path crosses estuaries, rivers, and streams, travelers should check ferry schedules or tide tables for the relevant areas before setting off. Services and tide levels can vary with the season or time of day.

BACKGROUND

DIGGING DEEPER Cornwall has a long mining heritage. The geological and geomorphological processes that created the county's landscape mean that there is a rich selection of minerals. In days past, miners recognized where mineralization occurred through indicators such as plant species and the hardness or tone of rocks (for example, greens marked secondary copper minerals or reds iron). Tin and copper were the main targets for miners, though other substances such as zinc and arsenic were also sought after. Though the mining industry has for the most part died out today, there are World Heritage sites throughout the region tracing their history between 1700 and 1914. Visitors can see the distinctively shaped stone buildings and tour sites such as Geevor Tin Mine, where an extensive selection of machinery is on show.



HELPFUL HINTS

SUSTENANCE Cream teas (tea with scones, clotted cream, and jam), fish and chips, and seafood are all culinary highlights of the West Country. Tired hikers might also find solace by making stops in pubs to sample locally brewed ales and the cider the region is renowned for.



FLORA & FAUNA

SEA VIEWS Gazing out over the ocean waves, visitors might see grey seals or dolphins. In the summer, basking sharks can sometimes also be spotted off the headlands of West Cornwall.

