

THE PERFECT WEEKEND IN...

PADSTOW

The route: Padstow, Newquay, Rock village, River Camel, Port Isaac, Port Gaverne

In quiet summer weather the north Cornish coast is a boating paradise few of us from the English Channel ever experience. Spectacular cliffs, long sandy beaches and picturesque fishing harbours create a nostalgic atmosphere of long summer hols far from metropolitan clamour. Time turns slowly as the tide uncovers rocky pools or creeps up old stone breakwaters. Yet there are also pockets of chic – Newquay is one of Europe’s finest surfing centres and Padstow a Mecca of seafood excellence. What better place to start a perfect weekend than Padstow’s charming locked basin, with lively bistros and salty pubs all around.

SATURDAY MORNING

Between springs and neaps you’ll have morning HW and it’s worth getting up early to explore Padstow’s meandering streets and quays before holidaymakers arrive. You’ll see Rick Stein’s famous restaurant on Riverside and catch a tantalising whiff of baking from real Cornish pasty shops. The basin is right in the heart of Padstow where trading ships once worked. When the tidal gate opens, follow a narrow channel close by the west shore of the River Camel to the wider outer estuary, where buoys lead past the dolefully named Doom Bar sands. From Stepper Point it’s then a magnificent 13-mile run south along the coast past Cornwall’s grandest beaches towards Newquay and its timeless drying harbour.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON

Within two hours of HW you can nudge into Newquay just for a look-see, its traditional seaside houses perched above the harbour beach. With luck you might stop briefly alongside the quay to buy fish and chips for lunch. Then move out to a splendid anchorage known as The Gazzle, with stunning views past Watergate Bay whose wide sands give such exhilarating surfing runs.

Cruising back north in the afternoon, tuck around Trevoze Head to anchor in Polventon Bay near the dramatic modern lifeboat house. Here you can swim in clear water over a sandy bottom. Soon after half-flood enter the Camel again, anchoring in the river if the weather is quiet, either off St George’s Cove or further up in the Pool.

SATURDAY EVENING

Lying at anchor you feel the true character of this fabulous Cornish estuary. The east shore dunes and green slopes sometimes remind me of South Brittany, though this part of Cornwall was first made famous by that very English poet John Betjeman and his lines about family summers at Trebetherick. Take the dinghy across to Rock pontoon and stroll into this trendy village for a drink at the Mariners with its gorgeous river views. You might eat here too, though the dining experience is slightly Chelsea-on-Sea. Over in Padstow land outside the inner harbour gate and

PROFILE

THE AUTHOR
Peter Cumberlidge

explored the north Cornish coast in detail when preparing his new *Bristol Channel and River Severn Cruising Guide*, published by Imray.



1 SATURDAY MORNING

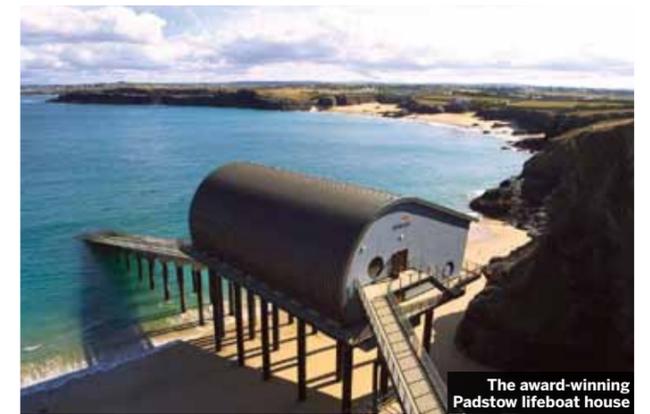


Padstow harbour is a must-visit spot

Photo: Alamy



Fresh fish and fishermen fill the waters around Newquay



The award-winning Padstow lifeboat house



Padstow's most famous export: Rick Stein



Surfers flock to Watergate Bay



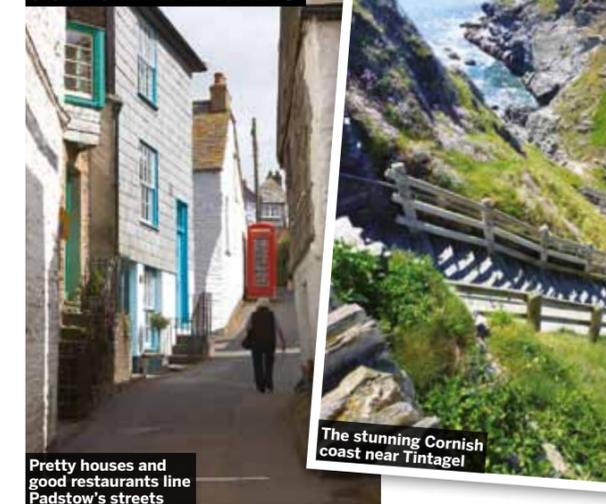
2 SATURDAY AFTERNOON

One of Newquay's six beaches, Fistral Bay



From Stepper Point it's a magnificent 13-mile run south along the coast past Cornwall's grandest beaches towards Newquay and its timeless harbour

3 SATURDAY EVENING



Pretty houses and good restaurants line Padstow's streets



The stunning Cornish coast near Tintagel

The entrance to Port Isaac harbour, as seen on *Poldark* and *Doc Martin*



4 SUNDAY MORNING

wander round the quays to consider the supper options. The Old Custom House on South Quay has a snug restaurant, good bar meals and fine Cornish beers. Rick Stein's seafood restaurant is a prime choice if you've booked well in advance. Or cut up Strand Street onto New Street for St Petroc's Bistro, where you can eat in the courtyard in warm weather.

SUNDAY MORNING

On still mornings the estuary looks idyllic as the sun warms the sand and lights the houses around Padstow harbour. After breakfast, potter upriver on the late flood, through a sleepy valley fringed with farms. Wadebridge lies four miles up where you can moor at a quayside pontoon and nip ashore for coffees and cakes.

Leave Wadebridge by an hour after high and come back out to sea, turning east round Pentire Point and inside Newland islet with the tide well up. Now for a mini-cruise past a string of fantastically sculpted headlands with tiny coves hidden between them. Poke your bows into Port Isaac and continue north to Tintagel Head and its mystical castle. Then return to anchor for lunch in Port Gaverne, an easy inlet next to Port Isaac.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON

Port Gaverne is a restful place, with a strip of beach, launching slip, café and the Port Gaverne Hotel, which does cracking bar lunches. Even in season this tiny valley feels remote and you can easily imagine the era of smugglers and excise men. Later, if the sea stays calm, you can anchor three miles further west in Port Quin Bay, just short of the Camel entrance under Rumps Point and a high humped rock called the Mouls. A perfect spot for a swim and last glimpse of the Atlantic before returning to Padstow on the evening tide.

Dramatic Port Quin Bay is well worth a visit in calm weather



5 SUNDAY AFTERNOON

NEXT MONTH WEYMOUTH

Do you have any personal cruising tips for, or quality photographs of, Weymouth and its surroundings? If so, email them to hugo_andreae@ipcmedia.com and we'll try and include them.

HARBOUR CONTACT DETAILS

Padstow harbour (Tel: +44 (0)1841 532239), VHF Ch 12 (open Mon-Fri 0800-1700 and HW±2hrs). **Newquay harbour** Tel: +44 (0)1637 872809.

HANDY FUEL BERTHS

Padstow harbour has diesel alongside the outer face of South Jetty, HW±2hrs.

FAVOURITE EATERIES

Padstow: The Old Custom House serves stylish pub grub and it's Pescadou restaurant is next door (Tel: +44 (0)1841 532359). Rick Stein's **Seafood Restaurant** is great fun (Tel: +44 (0)1841 532700). **St Petroc's Bistro** on New Street has superb steak as well as fish (Tel: +44 (0)1841 532700). **Rojanos** Italian restaurant on Mill Square (Tel: +44 (0)1841 532796). **Rock: Tides Restaurant** in the **Mariners** pub has an amazing collection of old West Country railway posters and fine cooking. (Tel: +44 (0)1208 863679).

Wadebridge: The Relish Café on Foundry Court does great breakfast and lunch five minutes from the quay (Tel: +44 (0)1208 814214).

Port Isaac: The popular Mote Bar at the head of the beach is ideal for pub lunches. The first-class **Harbour Restaurant** is deft with fish and shellfish (Tel: +44 (0)1208 880237).

Port Gaverne: The Port Gaverne Hotel has gorgeous crab soup, classic scampi and real Ploughmans! (Tel: +44 (0)1208 880244).

NAVIGATION NOTES

The mouth of the Camel has a bit of a reputation, but in moderate summer weather you can come and go without any problem within two hours of HW. The name 'Doom Bar' puts many visitors off unnecessarily, though in strong onshore winds the sea does break heavily in the entrance.

Strangers can venture up the Camel to Wadebridge visitors' pontoon for a good hour each side of HW except at neaps. Admiralty 1168 shows the way.

When coasting between Padstow and Newquay, keep three quarters of a mile off Park Head to avoid the Cow and Calf rocks. Also keep a good half mile off the long beaches because breaking surf can start a long way out.

Between Padstow and Tintagel Head the coast is quite simple in quiet weather, despite the gloomy "unsurveyed" sections on the chart.

The sunny courtyard at St Petroc's Bistro



The cove at Port Gaverne is a great spot for a lunch

