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A Guide to Rock, Cornwall

Sophie Farrah shares her tips for exploring Rock, North Cornwall

Whilst Rock may famously attract a well-heeled crowd, it still offers Cornish charm and natural beauty by the bucketload. Located on the county's rugged north coast, this small but perfectly formed village sits in a picturesque position on the banks of the Camel Estuary, almost directly opposite Padstow. With its sandy beaches, glorious walks, sparkling sea views, delicious food and more, this quaint seaside gem has all the ingredients for a perfect Cornish getaway.



Balance, Rock

Hit the shops

Despite its modest size, Rock has a good selection of independent shops and boutiques that are worth exploring. **The Beach House** is filled with stylish homewares and gifts as well as clothing for men and women and, rather conveniently, it sells ice cream too, so you can enjoy a scoop whilst you shop. Get kitted out at **The Lower Deck** next door, which is popular with the sailing set, whilst **Juice** nearby stocks a selection of elegant jewellery, luxury accessories and more.

Further along Rock Road, with the beach behind you, you'll find **Mooch**; a stylish little shop that sells lovely soft furnishings, clothing, and Scandi-chic homewares, and if you're in need of some pampering, you'll find serene and stylish spa space, **Balance**, just down the road.

If art's your thing, there are some impressive galleries too – **Rock Road Gallery** and **Jackson Gallery** are both bright, airy spaces filled with beautiful local landscapes, ceramics and sculpture, whereas **The Drang Gallery** is strikingly modern and boasts an impressive selection of works by the likes of Tracey Emin, Damien Hirst, Banksy and more.



Where to eat in Rock

Conveniently, Rock offers all the foodie essentials, and more. There's a family butcher, a fishmonger, a popular bakery and a good fish and chip shop too.

If you're planning a picnic, then head to **Fee's Food**. This well-designed deli of dreams is filled with delicious homemade treats alongside a variety of artisan brands and carefully sourced wines. Each day there's a wide choice of fresh pastries, cakes, local cheese, and homemade lunches, from salads and sandwiches to quiches and more, as well as a freezer full of homemade meals, all beautifully branded and packaged.

The Hut Behind the Hedge may be located in a car park, but don't let that put you off. This picture-perfect blue hut (open seasonally) sells delicious homemade cakes, sandwiches, ice creams and more, from a lovely green field with picnic tables overlooking the estuary.



If you're after something more substantial, then head to **The Mariners**; the latest addition to Paul Ainsworth's ever-expanding portfolio of top-notch restaurants in the county. This stylish, two storey pub overlooks the water and the patchwork of green fields beyond. Bag a table upstairs on the terrace and enjoy good cocktails, delicious, creative dishes, and a touch of fun food theatre too. Don't miss the legendary fish and chops, and the indulgent seafood cocktail, which comes cradled by a large silver octopus...

The Rock Inn boasts more beautiful views across the water to Padstow and is popular spot for a pint, as is cosy village local, **The Pityme Inn**, just a mile down the road. But, for a special occasion, the hottest table in town is **Karrek**; the chic and serene fine dining space at The St Enodoc Hotel. Here, experienced chef Guy Owen serves a precise, beautifully presented and incredibly delicious tasting menu that celebrates the very best of Cornwall. Much of the produce used is from the hotel's own gardens and its farm (a not-for-profit community enterprise in nearby Devon), combined with fresh local fish, oysters from nearby Porthilly, and more.



Explore Rock Estuary

Rock is a popular sailing hotspot, so there's a variety of boat clubs dotted along the water's edge. If you're keen to get out on the water, **Camel Ski School** is the largest waterski centre in the UK, specialising in wakeboarding, wake surfing, paddleboarding, kayaking, inflatable rides, and – you guessed it – waterskiing. It also has its own private floating 'island' in the estuary, which can be hired out for romantic meals and picturesque parties...

For more fun on the water, take an exhilarating power boat ride with **Wave Hunters** and head out to the open sea in search of dolphins, seals, seabirds and more. You'll also get close to the infamous Doom Bar – a treacherous sandbar at the mouth of the estuary responsible for many a shipwreck and the subject of much Cornish folklore.

Nearby Walks

Grab your boots and explore Rock on foot. A walk down to pretty **Porthilly Cove** is a must; at low tide Porthilly joins up with the golden sands of Rock Beach – one Cornwall's best loved beaches – so you can walk between the two.

Follow the white stone markers across the golf course and stunning sand dunes to the historic **St Enodoc Church** – a peaceful and picturesque place once buried in sand, and the final resting place of English poet, Sir John Betjeman. From here, you can continue on to the famous sandy beaches of **Daymer Bay** and **Polzeath**, and the sleepy village of **St Minver**.



Where to stay in Rock

Privately-owned boutique property, **The St Enodoc Hotel**, oozes laid back luxury and old-fashioned charm. Set in an elevated position in the centre of Rock with sweeping views over the estuary and rolling fields beyond, the hotel has 21 stylish bedrooms filled with thoughtful, luxurious touches. There are also two lovely restaurants, beautiful gardens, treatment rooms and a heated outdoor swimming pool (open Easter-September). Don't miss the hotel's lavish barbeques, served out on the terrace in the summer months.

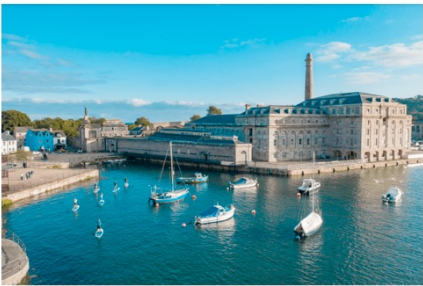
Alternatively, **Latitude 50** has a collection of stunning self-catering properties dotted around the North Cornwall coast. In Rock, **Fiddlesticks** comfortably sleeps 8 in 4 beautiful bedrooms; here, guests can swing in the hammock, splash in the private heated swimming pool and luxuriate within the blissful interiors. Nearby, **1 Slipway**, which sleeps 5, has spectacular 180-degree views across to Padstow and Porthilly, and easy access to Rock Beach.

Written by Sophie Farrah for The Maverick Guide to Cornwall. Lead Image: The St Enodoc Hotel ©

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