

Enjoy a day out on the Mineral Trails

The Mineral Trails, or the Cornwall Mineral Tramway, are a collection of paths that follow the route of the historic horse-drawn tramways that were once used to transport local tin and copper mining products.

Brimming with history, the Mineral Trails date back to the 19th century.

In the 1800s, tin and copper mining in Cornwall was a key source of income for the local communities. The mineral tramways were used to transport mining products to docks so that they could be shipped to market.

These days, the trails offer an exciting opportunity to learn about Cornwall's heritage whilst enjoying the stunning local landscape and discovering the many independent shops and eateries along the way.

Some trails are longer than others, with the most extensive pathway, the Coast To Coast Trail, coming in at around 11 miles. This trail, like the rest, is level in most parts and pedestrianised, giving great access for walkers, cyclists, and horse riders as well as being suitable for wheelchairs, prams and pushchairs.

Depending on what you want to see and how far you want to go, the Mineral Trails offer a variety of routes:

- The Portreath Branchline Trail is 5.5 miles long and connects the coastal town of Portreath to Illogan, a rural village near Redruth.
- The Great Flat Lode Trail is a circular 7.5-mile rural route that takes you past various Cornish engine houses - the distinctive buildings so associated with the area and the mining industry.
- The Coast to Coast Trail is the longest, at 11 miles. As its name suggests, this path connects the north and south coasts of Cornwall via the towns of Portreath and Devoran, which were both used as mineral ports.
- The Tresavean Trail is shorter at around 1.1 miles and follows the original horse-drawn route that served the Tresavean Copper Mine.
- The Tolgus Trail is perfect for families. It is the shortest route of the Mineral Trails at only 0.8 miles and takes you past the 19th-century tin mill at Cornwall Gold and the former Tolgus tin stream - an excellent place to take a break, have a bite to eat and explore Cornwall's mining heritage.

- The Tehidy Trail, 2.5 miles, explores Tehidy Country Park - the largest area of woodland in west Cornwall - and the many tracks within it.
- The Redruth and Chacewater Trail is 7.5 miles long. Originally a horse-drawn route, this line was later converted into a steam railway before it closed in 1915.

Many of these trails are interlinked and so you can create a custom route depending on how energetic you're feeling! There are some great places to stop and have a picnic or a snack along all of the routes. The scenery along the Mineral Trails makes for a beautiful pitstop wherever you decide to take a break.

These historic trails allow you to follow the journey of the products that fueled Cornwall's economy. Not only do they make for a great walk, but you'll also see many of the mining lodges and entrances that still stand today.

Fashioned from stone, these structures now form beautiful additions to the landscape, fragments of history that seamlessly blend into their surroundings.

Killifreth Engine House, Basset Lodge, and King Edward Mine are great examples of the many visual reminders of Cornwall's mining industry.

The Mineral Trails are also a great choice for nature lovers with a host of flora and fauna. If you're lucky you may spot barn owls, green woodpeckers, red deer, foxes, otters, and even common lizards.

Like so much of Cornwall, the Mineral Trails offer the opportunity to immerse yourself in the beautiful landscape. Whether you like to capture moments on camera or simply soak in the scenery, the picturesque surroundings are a delight for everyone.

There are plenty of things for children to see and do along the trails but if you need some extra inspiration on your trip, take a look at the Children's Activity Pack created by Cornwall Council. These are available for download at <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/mineral-tramways>.

The rich industrial history of the area is also complemented by an array of local restaurants, shops, and activities. Whichever trail you choose you're sure to find something new.

Discovering the Mineral Trails by bike is a fun family day out. There are plenty of cycle hire shops such as The Track or TR1 Cycles, or if you would like to purchase your own bike, head to Clive Mitchell Cycles where you can browse their range of new bikes and second-hand bikes.

The pathways are bike friendly and mostly flat with some steeper inclines. A few trails incorporate sections on public roads and/or crossings so make sure you look out for these.

And a day on the trails wouldn't be complete without sampling some of the delicious local cuisine. If you fancy combining bike hire and a snack, head to Saint Piran (located on the Coast to Coast Trail) where you can get the best of both worlds. The Hell's Mouth Kitchen and Bar, just up the coast from Portreath, offers excellent Cornish cream teas, light bites, and desserts. The Fox and Hounds, situated almost exactly halfway along the Coast to Coast Trail, is a fantastic place to take a break and enjoy a home-cooked meal.

The Mineral Trails are easy to navigate and explore. Free Maps Of Cornwall offers comprehensive and complimentary maps that detail the trails as well as local landmarks to check out, places to stop for a bite to eat, and bike rental shops.

Visit <https://freemapsofcornwall.co.uk/our-directory/business-place/the-mineral-trails/> for more information.