

10 THINGS TO DO IN LOOE FOR WONDERFUL HOLIDAY MEMORIES

1. EXPLORE BOTH EAST AND WEST LOOE AND ITS BEACHES

Looe is a town of two halves, joined by a historic bridge over a tidal river. Attracted by the fishing harbour, unique shops and restaurants, most visitors flock to East Looe and its safe family bathing beach, easily recognised by the Banjo Pier. But charming West Looe is more sedate and laid back. The beach at Hannafore has rocky outcrops, sandy inlets and amazing rockpools. Here, you can park for free, stroll on the flat or enjoy a cream tea gazing out to Looe Bay.

2. WATCH THE FISHING FLEET UNLOAD ITS CATCH

Looe is famous for landing the freshest fish in the UK. Why? Because the Looe fishing fleet is made up of day boats, going to sea and returning each day, ensuring their fish is fresh and of the highest quality. The trawlers land their catch on either side of the high tide. You'll need to be on East Looe near the fish market when they come back to port – and as the Looe River is tidal we can't tell you exactly when so grab a tide timetable.

3. EAT LOCAL FISH AND SEAFOOD IN LOOE RESTAURANTS

Looe day boats catch sustainable fish varieties that are not caught in many waters. Expect to see names of fish on the menu that you might not recognise like megrim sole, spider crab, gurnard, John Dory so be adventurous and try them!

4. DISCOVER LOOE'S BACKSTREETS AND PIRATE TALES

The quaint streets of East and West Looe spread inland from the quaysides, mostly shielded from the sea but not always the pirates! In 1625 they streamed onto Looe's cobbled streets and took eighty locals off to North Africa as slaves. Today, the pirate tradition is kept alive by 'Looe pirates, wenches & buccaneers' who appear at festivals and events in the town. Find out more about Looe's fascinating history at The Old Guildhall Museum & Gaol.

5. TRY FISHING - BOOK A BOAT

A two-hour mackerel fishing trip will certainly create memories as long as you can find your sea legs! You can reserve a place on one of several boats by writing your name on the boards along East Looe Quay. Keen fishermen can book day-long deep-sea fishing and shark 'tag and release' trips in advance. Or try a more leisurely sightseeing trip on a glass-bottomed boat around Looe Bay or to Polperro, enjoying the views and spotting wildlife including Looe's seals.

6. VISIT LOOE ISLAND – GETTING THERE, WHAT TO SEE

Looe Island – Cornwall's only island nature reserve lies just off the West Looe coastline. As a marine nature reserve, visits can only be made on official trips, bookable in advance via the Cornwall Wildlife Trust. It's such a magical unspoilt place where seals haul out on the rocks, where black-backed gulls, cormorants, shags and oystercatchers nest and you can feel totally at peace with the world. It takes 20 minutes by boat from Looe with about two hours to explore.

7. FAMILY FUN CRABBING ON THE QUAYSIDE

Catching crabs from Looe quayside is such a popular and traditional Looe pastime that stations have now been set up to recycle the crab lines! Regardless of age, this activity fascinates and entertains. Our tips: Smoked bacon is a better bait than fish and greater success will be had either side of the high tide.

8. WALK FROM LOOE TO POLPERRO OR CATCH THE BUS!

The Looe to Polperro walk takes a spectacular route on the South West Coast Path on a well-defined path arriving in the picturesque smuggling village of Polperro. Talland Bay provides a welcome pitstop en route where you can stop off for a swim or coffee. You can create a circular day trip by combining this 9 km walk with catching the train and/or bus from Looe (or indeed from the front door of Polraen Country House in the Looe Valley) and spend a day without worrying about your car or parking.

9. EAT THESE THREE THINGS WHILE IN LOOE

No holiday in Cornwall is complete without eating these three things. First, a Cornish Pasty, and in our opinion, the best pasty in Looe is from Sarah's Pasty Shop where you can see them being hand made. Second of course is a Cornish cream tea. To do it the proper Cornish way, it's always jam first, with lashings of clotted cream on top. The Island View Café at Hannafore gets our vote for the best cream tea experience in Looe. Last, the ubiquitous fish 'n chips, but not any old fish 'n chips Looe fish 'n chips bought at The Catch, Dave's Diner or The Cuddy Shack.

10. TAKE THIS TRAIN JOURNEY

The Looe Valley Line train runs on one of Cornwall's most scenic branch lines between the market town of Liskeard and the fishing port of Looe. From Sandplace, it passes Polraen Country House travelling on the prettiest stretch to Looe. Skirting the banks of the river, you'll see stunning views of the Looe Valley reflected in the water or when the tide is out, spot the wading birds on the mudflats. The train now runs daily until just past 9.30 pm.