

WATERGATE BAY

or Tregurrian Beach & Stem Cove

It is a breathtaking stretch of sand when viewed from the coast road high up on the cliffs above the beach. Watergate Bay is a well known and popular beach largely because of its surfing credentials, plus it is suitable for families, and more recently, has a nationally accredited restaurant perched immediately above the beach. It is only 4kms from [Newquay](#) and there are numerous caravan, camping and holiday complexes in the area. It hosts the legendary Boardmasters surfing championships in August.



Looking north towards Stem Point at low water

It is over 2.5kms in length stretching from Zacry's Islands and [Whipsiderry Beach](#) in the south to Stem Point in the north. At spring tides it is possible to walk to the sandy Stem Cove (or scramble across the rocks) at the northerly end of the beach which has no other means of access but care needs to be taken not to get cut off by the tide. Watergate Bay faces west and takes the full brunt of the powerful Atlantic swell and with a few exceptions is very exposed with little shelter. The most sheltered part of the beach is the delightfully named Fruitful Cove at the far south of the beach in the lee of Zacry's Islands but it suffers from being a 750m walk along the sand and is easily cut off by quickly rising tides. The Extreme Sports Academy is based at Watergate Bay providing tuition for surfing, power kiting, kite surfing and other sports.



Looking north



Looking south



An ideal beach for 'extreme' sports



TR8 4AA - Take the B3276 coast road north of Newquay to Padstow through [Porth](#). The road winds down into the valley next to the beach where there are two large car parks on either side of the road. The one immediately above the beach has a capacity of 200 cars and the one the other side of the road over 300+ cars. There is a popular viewing area next to the road on the cliffs above the Newquay side of the beach and next to it is a field which is opened up for car parking in the summer holiday period which involves a 250m walk along the Coast Path down to the beach.



There is only one major access point on to the beach which is down a short access road between the Watergate Bay Hotel and the car park which in turn leads to either steps or a slipway which enables disabled access. There are a number of other access



Access Point on to the beach with restaurant above.

points but these are along the northerly part of the beach from the Coast Path towards Stem Point and down Strasse Cliff but they are narrow and steep.



It is a glorious sandy beach which epitomises the North Cornwall coastline. At high water there is



Views of the beach

usually only a strip of sand above high water although its extent will vary considerably depending on the height of the tide and the sand levels on the beach which generally are higher in summer. The beach is backed by high cliffs but as the tide goes out the true expanse of the beach unfolds; it is mostly unbroken sand but with stony and rocky areas generally under the cliffs. There is a stream that crosses the beach adjacent to the main access spot. There are a number of caves to explore although there have been a number of fairly major cliff falls in recent years.



There is no rescue or safety equipment. RNLI Lifeguards are on duty during the Easter week and from the end of April until the beginning of October and operate designated bathing and surfing areas below the main access point.



It is an inherently dangerous beach for swimming due to strong rip currents, especially at low water. When the lifeguards are on duty entering the water should only be within the designated area and when permitted. It is possible to swim when the swell and surf dies down on a rising high tide but real care needs to be taken particularly for submerged rocks.



The main access to the beach



One of many caves



It provides a very consistent year-round beach break which is ideal for beginners and also those more experienced. It is well known for picking up a large swell and where the waves are powerful, hold their shape and give the occasional barrel; it is one of the few beaches where surfing is better on a high tide. Also, the surf can be fairly clean in a south-westerly wind. It is a well used beach for kite surfing as there are no restrictions and it hosts championship events. It is also a popular beach for sand yachting and power kiting in all its forms (especially with buggies) outside the holiday season.



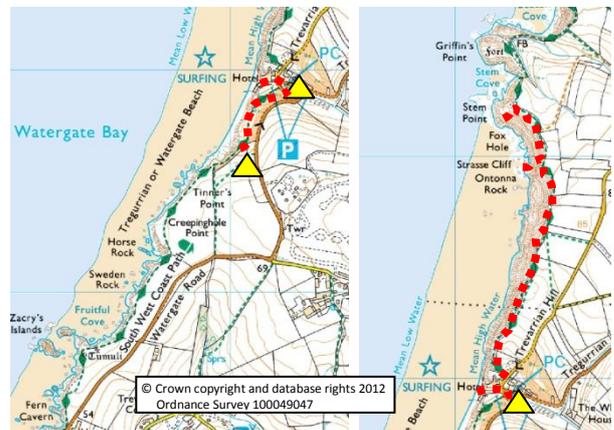
It is not a snorkelling beach at all. There are a few rock pools but they are not a feature.



Dogs are allowed on the beach all year. The toilets are located the other side of the main road on the right hand side of Tregurrian Hill about 200m from the beach.



There are cafes and beach shops with equipment hire and deck chair hire immediately above the beach with a restaurant above and others in the nearby Hotels.



Southerly section

Northerly section

Location – Part of OS Explorer Map 106



The slipway can be used to access the beach for small craft, sand yachts and sand buggies although in the height of summer when the beach is busy it is somewhat impractical.



The sea water quality is good but the stream can be variable especially after heavy rainfall. The TV series Echo Beach was filmed at the Bay as was the film 'Legends of the Leprechauns'.