

WIDEMOUTH

An impressive beach that is nearly 2kms long from Lower Longbeak Point in the north to [Wanson Mouth](#) in the south. It is a popular, easily accessible beach which is under 4kms south of [Bude](#); it has a great expanse of sand at low water but also has large rocky reefs at either end of the beach. Unlike so much of the North Cornwall coastline it is not backed by high cliffs so has a very open feel to it with sand dunes and grassy downs backing most of the beach. Surfers descend to it in numbers as the swell and waves are as potent as anywhere in this part of Cornwall. It faces west and can be fairly exposed at times. The facilities are very much focused at two points where the coast road is closest to the beach, the southerly area is known as Black Rock after the stretch of beach dominated by the rock after which it is named.



The expanse of Widemouth Bay at low water looking south



EX23 0AH - 5kms south of Bude on the A39 at the delightfully named Box's Shop there is a junction which is signposted to Widemouth Bay (1.3kms). Alternatively, from Bude take the coast road through Lynstone and Upton, known as Marine Drive, which leads to the car parks at Widemouth. From the south, the coast road from [Crackington Haven](#) (8.5kms) with its wonderful coastal views and dramatic high cliffs is well worth it. There are two large car parks serving the central parts of the beach. The northerly one has a capacity of over 350 cars and an additional grassy overspill area. The southerly one serving the Black Rock area has a capacity of over 300 cars and also has a grassy overspill area. There are also small more informal car parking areas next to the road at either end of the beach but these involve a walk to access points to the beach.



Below the main car park and the Salthouse end of the beach



There is a direct access on to the beach from both main car parks. There is a short flight of steps from the northerly car park and slipways from the Black Rock end car park. There are a number of access points across the downs and sand dunes from Marine Drive.



There are large areas of sand above high water mark but also areas of stone and shingle. At low water there is a spacious area of sand at the centre of the beach whilst at either end the rocky reefs are exposed meaning that access to the water is focused on the centrally part of the beach. Also at the centre of the beach there is a rocky outcrop above high water mark which provides ideal shelter when required. Whilst the central part of the beach can get crowded the sandy Salthouse northerly part is much less busy but it is along walk to the designated bathing area. It is also similar at the Black Rock end.



There is safety equipment at various points along the centre portion of the beach. There are two RNLI Lifeguard stations next to the two main car parks. They are on duty from late May until late September.



Rocky outcrop at the centre of the beach



The rocky reefs at the Salthouse end of the beach



The swell and surf that dominates conditions for most of the time makes it fairly unsuitable for swimming although there are occasionally calm conditions, and on a rising tide within the lifeguard designated areas, swimming is possible. Entering the water should only be within the designated areas because of strong currents.



It is one of the most popular surfing beaches in Cornwall with a fairly standard wave quality for this stretch of coast. It is a normal beach break and good for all types of surfers from beginners to the more experienced. When the beach gets crowded the more experienced surfers often surf the rocky reefs at either end of the beach but care needs to be taken with rocks at mid tide and above. It is a good beach for a range of extreme sports. There is surf tuition and surf board, body-boards and wetsuit hire for most of the summer.



It is not a snorkelling beach at all but at low water there are numerous interesting rock pools giving the beach much added interest, especially for children. Whilst the rocky reefs provide much interest care needs to be taken with the incoming tide which



The slipways and various views of the Black rock area of the beach

can be swift and catch youngsters unawares and getting back to the sandy beach can take time.



The southern section of the beach (Black Rock) has no restrictions on dogs. The northern part has restrictions from Easter day until the beginning of October.



There are toilets next to both of the car parks. The northerly one has disabled facilities.



There are cafes and beach shops adjacent to the two main access points and a pub on Marine Drive at the northerly end of the beach. There are a number of Hotels in Widemouth with dining facilities. A wider range of facilities can be found at Bude close by.



There is a slipway access on to the beach from the Black Rock car park and a sandy slope on to the beach at the side of the car park.



Location – Part of Explorer Map 111



Water quality is very good. The beach is regularly cleaned by Cornwall Council who own and manage the beach.



It is undoubtedly a fine family beach with a lot to offer. There are quiet and more secluded areas if they are required and the grassy downs offer a very attractive alternative for a picnic.