

South-west England by rail

Recommended trip length: 6-8 days

Discover golden beaches, historic cities and glorious countryside on this action-packed trip.



Wild countryside, dynamic cities, spectacular coastline: this rail itinerary has it all. From London, head west to discover Bath's cultural treasures and Bristol's vibrant festivals, before delving into Cornwall's arty villages and clifftop trails – and diving into its surf scene.

The route

• London • Bath • Bristol • St Austell • St Ives



Getting around

- This train route covers a distance of around 310 miles (500km), travelling on **Great Western Railway** services.
- To save money, purchase a 'Two Together' railcard, which gives two nominated passengers 33% off fares when they travel together.
- The itinerary can be completed in either direction. To travel in an easterly direction, first take the Night Riviera Sleeper from London to Penzance, then follow the route in reverse.
- Visit the **Great Scenic Railways website** for more information on the various branch rail lines in Devon and Cornwall.

Route highlights

- The Roman Baths
- Clifton Suspension Bridge
- Shipwreck Treasure Museum, St Austell
- Lost Gardens of Heligan
- The Eden Project
- Tate St Ives
- Bridgerton tour of Bath
- Bristol Harbour

Stop
1



London to Bath

After exploring **London**, catch an early morning train from Paddington to **Bath** (1.5 hours).

- Morning: Stroll Bath's treasures.**
From the Royal Crescent to the Roman Baths, the city is full of architectural gems – best explored on a **walking tour**, featuring Bridgerton filming spots, Austen's landmarks and more.
- Afternoon: Feast on foodie Bath.**
Enjoy a traditional afternoon tea at the **Pump Room**, freshly-baked buns at **Sally Lunn's**, or local cheeses and street food on a **Savouring Bath walking tour**.
- Evening: Sip cocktails at a gin distillery.**
Explore the weekly changing list of gin flavours and gin-based cocktails at **Bath Distillery Gin Bar**. Stay at **The Royal Crescent Hotel & Spa**, a short stroll from the town centre.

Bath to Bristol

The train between Bath and **Bristol** only takes 11 minutes, offering maximum flexibility.

- Morning: Soak in spa pools.**
Before heading west, relax in the mineral-rich waters of the luxurious **Thermae Bath Spa**, emerging refreshed and ready for adventure.
- Afternoon: Check out a festival.**
Bristol loves festivals, so see **what's on** during the trip: from live music at the **Bristol Jazz Festival** (March) to hot air balloon fun at **Bristol Balloon Fiesta** (August).
- Evening: Party at a floating club.**
Dance the night away at **Thekla**, a famous night club and gig venue on a converted German cargo ship moored in Bristol Harbour. Stay at the **Harbour Hotel** and Spa in the city centre.



Stop
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Stop 3



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Bristol to St Austell

Taking 3–4 hours, today's rail journey passes through Dawlish for glorious coastal views.



Morning: Spot wild peregrine falcons.

Before leaving Bristol, enjoy Avon Valley views from the Clifton Suspension Bridge, an engineering marvel – and maybe even spot peregrine falcons.



Afternoon: Discover lost bounty.

Explore the quirky side of Cornwall's maritime history at the **Shipwreck Treasure Museum** in St Austell – packed with coins and curios salvaged from over 100 wrecks.



Evening: Experience Cornish luxury.

Stay at the **Carlyon Bay** luxury resort and enjoy the complimentary facilities including a golf course, luxury spa, tennis courts and outdoor heated pools.

St Austell

If possible, spend an extra day visiting the **Lost Gardens of Heligan** and local beaches.



Morning: Get lost in a rainforest.

Discover the world's largest indoor rainforest at **The Eden Project**, in its state-of-the-art biomes – and look out for festivals, live music and entertainment too.



Afternoon: Toast the trip at an ancient brewery.

Raise a glass (or two) of award-winning beer on a behind-the-scenes tour of **St Austell Brewery**, a legendary Cornish brewery founded in 1851.



Evening: Sample local beers.

Enjoy a curated range of local, limited-edition Cornish beers and pizza at the recently opened **Harbour Beer House**.



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Stop 5



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St Austell to St Ives

After a night in St Austell, today's journey takes 2–3 hours; plan to arrive in **St Ives** for lunch.



Morning: Make a splash in St Austell Bay.

Relax on a glorious Cornish beach – or try jetskiing, paddleboarding, sailing and kayaking via a local watersports centre.



Afternoon: Tuck into fish and chips.

After travelling to St Ives, walk to Porthmeor beach (15 minutes) for fish and chips at **Porthmeor Beach Cafe** – a popular surfers' spot.



Evening: Catch a play at an outdoor theatre.

Take a taxi to the **Minack Theatre** (around 40 mins), an outdoor clifftop venue with incredible sunset views – hosting everything from opera to traditional sea shanties.

St Ives

Spend a full day – or longer – exploring this arty seaside town, before continuing the trip.



Morning: Try a surfing lesson.

Of all Cornwall's surf spots, St Ives is one of the best – so sign up for a session at **St Ives Surf School**, based on Porthmeor beach.



Afternoon: Be inspired by St Ives.

This tiny town has a huge art scene: delve into modern masterpieces at **Tate St Ives** or at the **Barbara Hepworth Museum and Sculpture Garden**.



Evening: Return to London.

Catch the **Night Riviera Sleeper** – an overnight train from Penzance (40 mins from St Ives by bus). It takes 8–9 hours, arriving at London Paddington in the early morning.



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Stop 6

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