

HEALTHY SELFIE TRAIL

GEOPARK
JOURNEYS

TORQUAY PIER TO PIER CIRCULAR

2 MILES



Use the what3words codes to follow a circular route (or follow the map and directions) and learn some extraordinary facts about the English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark along the way.



Why not take some selfies (we've suggested a few picturesque spots along the way) and tag us at #healthyselfie, #extraordinarygeopark and #englishriviera? We would love to see your photos. Have fun!

These trails have been created with the help of Living Options to be as accessible to as many people as possible. With this in mind, we point out parking (and public transport options), toilets and Changing Places Toilets (where available). We have also tried to use wide and flat walkways and avoid any areas that tend to get overly busy or loud.

This route only crosses two roads (at traffic light crossings) and has a number of benches on the route to allow people to rest along the way.



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TORQUAY PIER TO PIER CIRCULAR

2 MILES



1. This walk starts on Beacon Quay by the D-Day Memorial next to the Harvester Restaurant (**what3words: sleeps.knee.hooked**). If you are travelling by bus, please see the Stagecoach website for route information. Following the completion of the Torquay harbourside works (set for completion in Autumn 2024) there will be a new public transport hub on Cary Parade, from where you can join the route.

There is accessible parking on the top level of Beacon Quay Car Park. There are also two disabled parking spaces by the Elephant Restaurant on the other side of the road. Before starting the main route, you can take an option extension along the path to Beacon Cove (**what3words: transit.money.record**) to take in the views and read more about the geology, marine life and Agatha Christie on the interpretation panels along the path.

2. There are disabled pay toilets here (**what3words: hours.angel.flood**).
3. Turn left and in the direction of the ring then turn right onto Haldon Pier.

EXTRAORDINARY FACT!

Beacon Quay was used as an embarkation point by the US Army for the D-Day Landings. Some 200,000 soldiers departed from the two 'D-Day slipways'. A piece of civic art created by Bob Budd features a cross of light that you can stand on (just outside the Harvester Restaurant) and look in the direction of the 7-metre diameter steel ring, which shows the direction the soldiers left in. Lights along the promenade spell out VANISHING POINT in Morse Code, as many of those brave souls would never return.

4. Follow the pier to the end, (**what3words: jumpy.piano.trail**).

Please note there is an unfenced drop into the sea at the harbour entrance, so don't go too close!

EXTRAORDINARY FACT!

As you head out to the end of the pier, you will eventually get fantastic views across Torbay on a clear day. Looking across the water you will see the limestone plateau of Berry Head some four mile away. This is the southern protective arm of the Bay (Hope's Nose is the northern one) and the Bay usually remains calm unless the wind is blowing from the east. Following the Bay around to the right you will see Brixham, then an area called Seven Quarries (where limestone was once mined) and then on around to Broadsands (with two of Brunel's lofty viaducts), Goodrington with its waterslides and then Paignton with its iconic pier.

- Retrace your steps right back to the start of the walk and then follow the cycle route around the bottom of the harbour (**what3words: feeds.pull.crisis**) and onto the Harbour Bridge.

EXTRAORDINARY FACT!

If you look around to the left (just past the Imperial Hotel) you will spot Saddle Rock at Peaked Tor Cove. On the top of this rock is a small concrete diving platform that was created by a local diver called Tack Collins, when he rowed out there with a bucket of cement. Using the rock to practice, he was later selected for the Great Britain High Diving Team and competed in the 1908 London Olympics. Aged 36, he was the oldest competitor in the competition and sadly ended up unplaced, but still became a bit of an “Eddie the Eagle” along the way.

- Once on the other side, turn left at the Marina Office (**what 3 words: left.cube.reply**) to follow Princess Parade along the side of the outer harbour.

EXTRAORDINARY FACT!

Many people will remember that the harbour used to be tidal and would end up very muddy and unattractive on the low tide. The bridge was part of a 21-million Millennium harbourside development plan that saw it linking the north pier and south pier for the first time. A set of metal underwater gates keeps the inner harbour at a perpetual mid tide and when the bridge lifts, these gates are simultaneously lowered to allow boats safe passage.

- At the circular ‘banjo’ area, follow the path around in an anti-clockwise direction towards the Princess Theatre.

EXTRAORDINARY FACT!

Princess Gardens are built on reclaimed land, with the foundation stone laid by Princess Louise, daughter of Queen Victoria in 1890. The gardens are planted with what became known as Torbay Palms (actually imported from New Zealand) while the attractive fountain was donated by nearby Torbay Hotel. The mouldings were used to cast a sister fountain outside the Raffles Hotel in Singapore.



*AT THE FOUNTAIN WITH THE PAVILION
IN THE BACKGROUND*

8. When you reach the pier, take a look to the left to see the Geopark information panel on the railings. Then turn left to walk down the pier, taking in the amazing views.

EXTRAORDINARY FACT!

Princess Pier is not actually a pier, but instead a breakwater with no water passing under it like a conventional pier. Agatha Christie famously enjoyed roller skating on it and you might be able to spot a photo of her doing just that in the window of the café of The Princess Theatre. Today the pier still makes a wonderful (and accessible) viewing platform from which to admire a fantastic view of the Bay. This includes the red cliffs at Corbyn's Head, created as the sea levels rose at the end of the last glaciation. These sand stone cliffs also explain the red sand that can be found on Torre Abbey Sands, which according to boffins from Bournemouth University is the best sand in the UK for making sand castles.

9. Turn around just before the slope and retrace your steps before turning left at the Boat Trip hut to continue along the parade with the sea on your left.



**SELFIE
SPOT!**

AT THE START OF PRINCESS PIER

EXTRAORDINARY FACT!

If you look to the left of the Grand Hotel, you will see how the relentless power of the sea has continued to carve a series of sea caverns in the Permian rocks below headlands of Corbyn's Head and Livermead Head, which Charles Kingsley (author of *The Water Babies*) describes as resembling Hindi Temples. He wrote a book about his explorations around this section of coast called *Glaucus: or the Wonders of the Shore* which became a bestseller and started a Victorian craze for drawing seaweed, as well as collecting and pressing it.

10. You will pass more accessible pay toilets on your right
(**what3words: gloves.pines.drums**)
11. Turn right at the wishing well, just before the giant pebbles
(**what3words: stump.brains.guitar**)
12. Cross the road at the lights and then turn right.
13. Turn left onto the slope up onto Royal Terrace Gardens/Rock Walk
(**what3words: wires.pipes.props**)

14. Follow the path along the bottom of the gardens.

EXTRAORDINARY FACT!

If you walk through Royal Terrace Gardens (known locally as Rock Walk) at night, you will be able to enjoy a lighting scheme introduced in 2021 called Lightplay. Light columns have been laser cut to reveal shapes ranging from birds to seaweed and corals, while projections onto the walkway reveals other shapes. This is a celebration of the English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark and the work of local people like internationally famous seaweed collector, Amelia Griffiths and geologist William Pengelly, who excavated Kents Cavern. You may be able to spot evidence in the cliffs here of the Sticklepath Fault, which crosses Devon before heading out to sea. This fault line created the steep cliffs here and was responsible for earth tremors in 1955.

15. Follow slope back down onto the pavement at the end and continue along pavement before crossing the road at the crossing back the Torbay Hotel (**what3words: clown.sock.atom**).

EXTRAORDINARY FACT!

Artist Juliet Hayson was commissioned to create six rock sculptures along the walk. Three are from white Carrara Marble from North-West Italy and three from pink/grey Devon limestone from Stoneycombe Quarry. They reference Torquay's Italianate architecture and riviera influences. In a small grotto, you will see a work by Tom Price called "Speleothem," which means "cave deposit" in Greek. From a distance it looks like a stalagmite, but on closer inspection it is made from random man-made artefacts, souvenirs and trinkets and questions our relationship with and impact on the environment.



IN AMONGST THE TROPICAL PLANTS

16. Walk down the side of the Pavilion and then turn left to retrace your steps back to the start.

EXTRAORDINARY FACT!

The art nouveau-styled Pavilion Theatre, with its copper domed roof and white enamelled tiles and octagonal bandstands opened in 1912. With an impressive foyer and auditorium, it was once home to the 25-piece Torquay Municipal Orchestra and welcomed everyone from composer Sir Edward Elgar, ballerina Anna Pavlova, operatic soprano Dame Nellie Melba and entertainer George Formby. It was following a concert of music by Wagner that Archie Christie proposed to Agatha Miller in 1913. The beautiful building has been closed since 2013, but there are signs that the building may be restored and reopening in the (hopefully) not too distant future.

Walk End!



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