

Three Cliffs Bay - Time out!

My first visit to Three Cliffs Bay will remain forever associated with guilty pleasure. It was not long after we had moved to Swansea. My husband was a Warden at one of the University Halls of Residence and I was a newly qualified teacher at the start of the May half term. I dropped my husband into work after lunch and picked up a student friend who lived at the Hall for the return journey.

A pile of marking awaited me and he was returning to further revision for summer exams - the sky above us was azure blue and went on forever. Somewhere between the University and the Hall we "missed" the turning and ended up at Three Cliffs Bay. I can still conjure memories of the warm sun on my back and the smooth sand between my toes during our unscheduled walk on that glorious late Spring day. OK, it's not Fifty Shades of Grey but we felt naughty enough taking a couple of hours off work - more innocent times maybe!

Whether you are on holiday or sneaking a short break from work yourself, Three Cliffs is a lovely stretch of the Gower coast to explore. There are a number of routes which lead down to the bay, all require a moderate walk so sensible footwear is suggested. The route from Penmaen (shown above) affords pretty views over the valley, with it's meandering river and famous cliffs in the background as you approach.

For the more sedentary, there are a number of viewpoints from the road (A4118) which allow you to view enjoy the cliffs from a distance and in passing. It is difficult to get a bad camera angle on these iconic rocks, so click away and expose your friends to this little area of happiness. For those with an interest in the geology of the area, the Geological Society have provided a wonderfully detailed explanation of [Three Cliffs Bay geology](#), keen enough to start with a description of a rocky outcrop by the telephone box in Penmaen and then guiding the reader down and around the bay itself.

In addition to Penmaen, it is also possible to reach the bay via walking routes from Parkmill, where again parking is available. If you approach Three Cliffs Bay from either of these routes you will have the added fun of using the stepping stones to cross the river. Go back a forth a few times - stepping stones are not that common in life and you should enjoy them while you can. Then of course you can take your shoes off and have a nice paddle (to remind yourself just how freezing river water always is compared with the sea!) and build a dam or two.

Pennard Castle provides a dramatic addition to the skyline on the inner edge of the Bay, as if any more were needed. David Ross has provided a detailed [background to the castle](#) for those who would like to understand it's history, and it is a beautiful location to stay awhile and enjoy the vista. As he suggests, the route from Parkmill is a good one to follow if you would

particularly like to visit the castle itself, otherwise, cast your eyes upwards as you make your way to the seafront and you will have a great view of it on the horizon.

The third common way to approach Three Cliffs Bay is from the village of Southgate. There is a large National Trust car park here, a good place for a picnic with lovely views across the Bristol Channel to Devon. Three Cliffs lies at the end of the cliff walk as you turn right out of the car park with the sea in front of you. The National Trust have thoughtfully provided a [walking route](#) on their site which you can download but keep walking with the sea on your right and you can't miss it. The view below is that which greets you before you descend to the bay. The beach in front of three cliffs here is actually cut off from the main beach as the tide comes in and therefore warrants its own name - Pobbles Bay.

Pobbles is quite sheltered and our kids have been known to strip off and splash in the larger sand pools in the November sunshine, which caused me to think I was a bad parent at the time but doesn't seem to have done them any lasting harm! This was our most common route to the beach after that first summer visit, often part of a winter dog/child walk and chosen for the warming beverage and delicious home cooked cakes at [Three Cliffs Coffee Shop](#) which rounded off our trip. Lunch at this compact and bijou eatery became a family tradition on Christmas Eve and we've never quite found anywhere local to us now to replace it, so enjoy it for us if you pass through!

If you have visited this beach yourself I hope this has brought back some happy memories of your own. Perhaps you would like to share them in the comments section below. If you have lived a life which has not yet included Three Cliffs Bay, then perhaps it's time to remedy that. The final link will take you to some jolly nice local accommodation ([Gower Edge](#)), the booking of which might be a good first move in that direction!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sylvia Mawby was lucky enough to live in Swansea for 19 years and her two (now grown up) boys were born and did a fair bit of growing up there. When the family moved to the Midlands for work she kept on the family home to run as the self catering holiday let Gower Edge. She still loves to visit the area and misses the sea terribly - especially when there's marking to be done!

LINKS FOR THIS POST

[Geology of Three Cliffs Bay](#)

[National Trust Walk from Southgate to Three Cliffs Bay](#)

[History of Pennard Castle](#)

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<http://www.gower-self-catering.co.uk>

[Three Cliffs Coffee Shop and Restaurant](#)

[Gower Edge Holiday Accommodation](#)