

This walk description is from happyhiker.co.uk

Salcombe to Gara Rock

Starting point and OS Grid reference	Ferry jetty at East Portlemouth (SX 743387)
Ordnance Survey map	OL20 South Devon – Brixham to Newton Ferrers
Distance	4.3 miles
Traffic light rating	

Introduction: This is a walk with beautiful coastal views, access to lovely beaches and lovely views of the Salcombe Estuary (actually a “ria” not an estuary but commonly referred to as an estuary). The walk is a shorter alternative to my Salcombe to East Prawle route but still contains some of the best views.

Gara Rock itself is a pretty unassuming part of the cliffs, notable mainly for the old thatched Rickham Coastguard station above Gara Rock itself. This was built in 1847 as a vantage point for the “Preventative Water Guard” who looked out for smugglers and ships in distress. The other association is the lovely beach, although I believe the linked beaches are more properly Seacombe Sand and Rickham Sand (aka Abraham’s Hole) and the apartment complex and café/bar.

I make an assumption that most people would start from Salcombe, using the ferry because Salcombe is more easily accessible by car and public transport. You could start from East Portlemouth if you went down the other side of the “estuary”. There is a National Trust car park at Mill Bay.

Lots of refreshment opportunities at the Gara Rock or numerous pubs/cafes on return to Salcombe.

To get to Salcombe, take the A381 out of Kingsbridge and keep going! There are two potential pay and display car parks in Salcombe. One is on Shadycombe Road which you pass on your way to the other at Gould Road. There is another on Fore Street but it is tiny, your chances of getting a space there infinitesimal and by then you will be in the one way system and past all central car parks. There is free street parking on Devon Road . A copy of the street map is attached to the PDF document. A Park and Walk – sometimes Ride now operates.

Start: For ease of reference, the walk description starts at the ferry jetty on the East Portlemouth side of the estuary (SX 743387). There is a continuously running ferry during the day from Salcombe to this jetty but check the ferry times. It is a long way round if you miss the last one (although water taxis are available).

At the top of the jetty, turn right following the sign for Mill Bay.

At Mill Bay (SX 742382) where there is a National Trust car park, turn right on to the coastal footpath signposted “Gara Rock 2½ miles”. On reaching a fork with a footpath post bearing yellow arrows, bear right and at the next fork signed “Beach Only” to the right, keep left. The beach in question is the aptly named Sunny Cove.

On reaching a bend where there is a bench, ignore the path to the left. Here there is a memorial to commemorate the centenary of the Salcombe Lifeboat Disaster of 27 October 1906 when 13 crew members died.

It is now a case of following the coastal path to Gara Rock. A landmark to tell you when you have arrived, is the thatched Rickham Coastguard station referred to in the introduction together with the new apartments and bar,

Before continuing the walk, it is worth a descent to the very nice beach here.

Follow the footpath up to the apartments and follow the access road for about 250 yards.

Turn left off the road at a fingerpost indicating “Mill Bay 1 mile” and “Link to Coast Path”.

On reaching a broad track, go straight across following the blue brideway arrows.

The brideway drops down to the National Trust car park from which you follow the road back to the ferry.



Street Map of Salcombe



