



Cape Wrath Classic

The **Cape Wrath Trail** is unusual in that there is no set route – walkers effectively make their own version of the trail, taking a line between Fort William and Cape Wrath. Our Cape Wrath Classic takes in some of the best sections of the north western part. The quality of the landscape and wildlife is exceptional. We may occasionally see golden eagles, otters and possibly sea eagles. There is a very good chance of seeing red deer, ravens and ptarmigan on the higher slopes. In the Handa Island bird reserve we may see puffins, divers, gannets, as well as arctic and great skua.

Most of the area where we walk sits inside the North West Highlands Geopark and is one of the most famous areas for geology in the British Isles. Assynt in particular has been described as an 'internationally acclaimed geological showpiece'. The area has some of the oldest rock formations on earth, as well as limestone caves where traces of early man, wolves and bears have been found.

The Cape Wrath Trail visits terrain both remote and pristine. The coast and mountains of Sutherland present one of Europe's last great wildernesses and when you sign up for this trail, you're signing up to a truly memorable experience.

Travel

Holiday start

Your holiday starts in Inverness. Our group transfer will collect guests from Inverness Airport or from Inverness Rail Station at the following times:

3.00pm: Inverness airport. The airport pick-up point is in front of the Terminal Building. Look out for our HF Holidays leader or the Durness Bus Company who will be holding an HF Holidays sign.

3.30pm: Inverness railway station. The rail meeting point is in the station near WHSmiths. Our leader may be on the coach from the airport, but will come to the meeting point and direct you to the coach. Note: as the coach starts from the airport it may have to wait for a delayed flight.

Please contact us on 0208 732 1266 or e mail trails@hfholidays.co.uk to confirm your travel details and where you require to be picked up. If you will not be using our transfer please let us know, so that the group is aware not to wait for you.

The transfer from Inverness to Rhiconich is approximately 2½ hours with a short stop on the way.

Holiday Finish: We will return you to Inverness railway station for 9.30am or to Inverness airport for 10.00am.

Travel by rail:

There is a regular rail service to Inverness. For train times and general rail enquiries visit www.nationalrail.co.uk or call 03457 484950. For National Rail enquires from overseas call +44 (0)20 7278 5240

Travel by air:

There are a number of low-cost flights from around the UK to Inverness and if you are flying from overseas there are some international flights to Inverness.

Baggage transfers:

When you change from one Hotel to another we will arrange for your luggage to be transferred for you. This is included in the cost of your holiday. Please remember that other people will need to move your suitcase so please pack thoughtfully with a maximum of 20 kilos. If you can limit your luggage to one bag, rucksack or suitcase that would be very



Cape Wrath Classic

helpful. Please make sure your bags are clearly labelled with your name and "HF Holidays".

Accommodation:

You will stay at two different hotels which may not be modern and well equipped but are comfortable and offer a warm welcome in lovely locations and close to the walks.

In the hopefully rare event of any cause for complaints regarding accommodation you should notify your leader who can then attempt to rectify the problem.

Rhiconich Hotel (4 nights)

Kinlochbervie, Sutherland, IV27 4RN, Scotland

Tel: 01971 521224

Website: www.rhiconichhotel.co.uk

The Rhiconich Hotel is in lovely surroundings with the spectacular peaks of Arkle and Foinhaven behind and in front the beautiful Loch Inchard. All rooms have TV, tea and coffee making facilities, hairdryer, toiletries and WiFi. A small room is available for drying clothes and boots.

Inchnadamph Hotel (3 nights)

Assynt, Sutherland, IV27 4HN, Scotland

Tel: 01571 822202

Website: www.inchnadamphhotel.com

The Inchnadamph Hotel was originally a coaching inn and is over 200 years old and surrounded by the spectacular mountain scenery of Assynt. Rooms have tea and coffee making facilities, toiletries and hairdryer (on request). There is no TV, radio, or mobile phone reception and WiFi is limited. Drying facilities are good.

Trail Grading



Cape Wrath Classic is graded 4, with walks /hikes of long distances in remote

countryside and rough and often pathless terrain, occasionally requiring river crossings. Sustained ascents and descents and occasional sections of rocky and steep ground are encountered. Weather can be unpredictable. You will require a good level of fitness as you will be walking every day. It is your responsibility to ensure you have the relevant fitness and equipment required to join this holiday.

Fitness:

We want you to be confident that you can meet the demands of each walking day and get the most out of your holiday. A sustained effort is required to complete each walk and provision cannot be made for anyone who opts out. Please be sure you can manage the mileage and ascent detailed in the daily itineraries. Each walking day on this holiday will vary between approximately 6 and 9 hours and it is important for your own enjoyment, and that of your fellow guests that you can maintain the pace.

It makes a lot of sense to spend time getting some additional exercise before your holiday. We suggest that you try to fit in a number of longer walks, including some on hilly and rough terrain. Other exercises such as cycling, jogging and swimming are also excellent for developing increased stamina.

Minibus transport between the walking route and your accommodation is included in your holiday price. Also included are the ferry crossings and a boat trip on Glendhu Loch.

Planned Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival day

Transfer from Inverness rail station and airport, leader introduction and evening meal.



Cape Wrath Classic

Day 2: Cape Wrath

We use a ferry to cross the Kyle of Durness and a minibus takes us to Cape Wrath, the most northerly point on the mainland in a stunning setting with its lighthouse sitting on top of some of the highest cliffs in Britain. From Cape Wrath you'll walk across pathless terrain to Sandwood Bay and its famous sea stack, Am Buchaille. This is a wild and remote area. There are no escape routes or vehicular access and the route can involve crossing rivers, bog and peat hags. The rewards however are spectacular. 14 miles (22 km) with 1500 feet (450m) of ascent.

Day 3: Ben Stack

Walk along the delightful banks of the River Laxford, one of Scotland's finest salmon rivers, followed by an ascent of the pyramidal Ben Stack. The walk on Ben Stack is steep in places with only intermittent paths and leads to a fine summit ridge with fine views to Arkle and Foinavon. 7.5 miles (12.5 km) with 2,500 feet (760m) of ascent.

Day 4: Achfary to Glen Coul

Follow a good path across to Kylesku at the mouth of Loch Coul, and take a boat trip on Glendhu Loch with spectacular views of the local mountains and amazing geology and bird life. 8 miles (13.2 km) with 1,320 feet (400m) of ascent.

Day 5: Handa Island

A short ferry crossing takes you to this Scottish Wildlife Trust Bird Reserve where we have plenty of time to watch the sea birds and enjoy a superb cliff top walk around the island visiting the Great Stack of Handa. Occasionally dolphins and even whales can be seen. 4 miles (6.5 km) with 500 feet (150m) of ascent.

Day 6: Bealach na h-Uidhe

A walk from Loch an Gainmich through wild and remote scenery to the delightful Loch Bealach a Bhuirich. From here an excellent stalkers' path brings us up to the pass between Glas Bheinn and Beinn Uidhe, where ptarmigan can sometimes be seen, before descending across country to our hotel at Inchnadamph. 10 miles (16km) with 2,250 feet (680m) of ascent.

Day 7: In the shadows of Suilven

Trek through some of the wildest and most dramatic scenery in Scotland beneath Canisp and the iconic Suilven, whose ever changing form and dramatic outline will captivate you. The route finishes at Lochinver. 12 miles (19km) with 800 feet (245m) of ascent.

Day 8: Departure Day

Transfer back to Inverness airport and rail station.



The itinerary may be subject to change at the discretion of the leader with regard to the weather and other external factors



Cape Wrath Classic

Trail Leader

Our experienced and knowledgeable volunteer leaders undergo a thorough assessment to lead you on your Guided Walking/ Hiking Trail and will also be delighted to share their knowledge and enthusiasm with you.

Please ensure you complete and hand in your registration form on arrival and let the leader know about any medical problems you may have. This may be useful in the event of a problem on the walk and will be treated confidentially by the leader.

What to wear

To enjoy walking /hiking comfortably and safely, footwear, clothing and equipment needs to be suitable for the conditions. Safety is our priority and Britain is famous for its changeable weather, so our advice is to come prepared for all eventualities. Footwear with a good grip on the sole (e.g. Vibram sole) is the key to avoiding accidents. Walking/hiking boots providing ankle support and good grip are recommended (ideally worn in), and specialist walking socks to avoid blisters. Several layers of clothing, which can be added or removed, are better than a single layer (include spares). Fabrics (lightweight and fast drying) designed for the outdoors are recommended. Waterproof jacket and waterproof over trousers are essential and a warm hat and gloves. Gaiters are an optional but useful extra, as are trekking sandals for crossing rivers. Denim jeans and capes are not suitable on any walks.

What to bring

Rucksack with a waterproof liner, thermos flask for hot drink, water bottle (at least 1 litre) and spare high-energy food such as a chocolate bar. Small torch (particularly in

spring, autumn and winter) and first aid kit – your leader's first aid kit doesn't contain any medication or blister kits (such as Compeed). Walking poles are useful, particularly for descents. Insect repellent, sun hat, sunglasses and protection cream and camera are all optional extras you may choose to bring.

Ticks

Ticks are tiny creatures that live in vegetation and can attach themselves to passing animals or walkers and may carry a risk of Lyme Disease. Please refer to NHS advice and guidelines for information prior to your holiday.

On the walk

We try to create a relaxed atmosphere on the walk but please listen to safety instructions from your leader. Keep members of the group in view especially when weather or visibility is poor. If you leave the group, then your leader will no longer have responsibility for you. Our leaders consider the safety of the group as a whole and are likely to be more cautious over potential risks such as bad weather.

In the event of a problem

If you become separated from the party please stay where you are. Your leader will retrace their steps to find you. All our leaders carry a mobile phone, group shelter, spare maps and a compass. In the unlikely event your leader is incapacitated, please use any emergency kit in their rucksack. Call the emergency services (call 999 in the UK, or 112 overseas). Please then try to call the hotel where you are staying to let them know there is a problem.

Maps and Guides

Your trail leader will carry all the necessary maps and guides. For your own interest you



Cape Wrath Classic

may consider looking at some of the following:

www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk

www.johnmuirtrust.org

Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 maps

Landranger 9: Cape Wrath, Durness & Scourie

Landranger 15: Loch Assynt & surrounding area

North to the Cape, Denis Brook & Phil Hinchliffe (Cicerone Guide)

Hostile Habitats, Mark Wrightham & Nick Kempe

Hutton's Arse: 3 billion years of extraordinary geology in Scotland's Northern Highlands, Malcolm Rider

Travel Insurance

Travel and any other personal insurance relevant to your holiday is recommended to all our guests.

While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, the information in this guide may change after it has been printed. For the most up-to-date information please see our website or use the contacts below.

Enquiries

Local rate 0345 470 7558

(Standard rate +44 (0)20 8732 1250)

info@hfholidays.co.uk

www.hfholidays.co.uk