

4 Night Isle of Wight Family Walking Adventure

Trip style: Family walking holidays

Destination: 📍 Isle of Wight

Trip code: FRW04-FAM01

Trip Walking Grade: ⚙️ 1 & 2

Carbon Footprint: 🌳 103kg CO2



Holiday Overview

A firm favourite with families seeking a seaside escape, our holidays on the Isle of Wight will keep both kids and grown-ups happy. Hunt for fossils on the sands of Compton Bay, discover a secret rocket-testing range, and explore Carisbrooke Castle – the mighty fortress that held King Charles I prior to his execution in 1649. Further area attractions include Tennyson Down, Alum Bay, Ventnor Botanical Gardens, and Osborne House.

WHAT YOU'LL LOVE

- Under 11s GO FREE
- Meeting other families
- Optional guided walks with an experienced HF Holidays Leader
- Exploring beaches, caves, and coastline
- Staying in our seafront country house
- Swimming in the pool at Freshwater Bay

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Ride on the Isle of Wight Steam Railway
- Family rooms available subject to availability
- Comfortable en-suite accommodation in our country house
- Cream tea on arrival day
- Cooked or continental breakfast every morning
- Daily packed lunches
- Three-course evening meals tailored towards families, plus tea & coffee
- Guided walking with experienced HF Holidays Leaders
- Choice of up to four guided walks (on walking days)
- All transport to and from walks where necessary
- Get 15% off car travel and 20% off foot travel via www.wightlink.co.uk/HFHolidays
- Easy-to-follow routes, maps, and information in our Discovery Point if you want to explore independently

WALKING GRADES AND OPTIONS

This holiday is ideal for families with children 4+yrs. Please check you can manage the daily walks distance and ascents, detailed in your itinerary. The walking day is normally 6 to 8 hours.

There are four different length guided walks to choose from each walking day.

Level 1 - Slow-paced 3-4 mile walks with up to 650 feet of ascent.

Level 3 - Mid-range walks are 5-7 miles with up to 1,250 feet of ascent and 7-9 miles with up to 1,300 feet of ascent.

Level 5 - Longest walks are 10-13 miles with up to 1,750 feet of ascent.

ITINERARY - FAMILY WALKS

Day 1 Arrival Day

Check-in at the hotel is available from 16:00. If you are a member you can arrive at the house from 14:00 in 2026. Enjoy a complimentary cream tea at 16:30 and meet other guests

Day 2 Ventnor, Steephill Cove and Godshill

Option 1 - Niton to Ventnor Coast

Distance: 5 miles (8km)

Ascent: 500 ft (160m)

With this option we'll walk from Niton to the village of Whitwell and on to Steephill Cove. Enjoying great views of the English Channel, we'll reach the island's highest point and pass by both its oldest inn and what's arguably one of its prettiest beaches. We'll round off with a stop at Ventnor Botanic Garden (payable locally).

What your kids will love: Rock pooling at Steephill Cove and reaching the medieval lighthouse that marks the highest point on the island. Look closely. Can you see why it's nicknamed the "Pepperpot"?

Option 2 - Chale Green to Ventnor via Coastal Path

Distance: 8 miles (13km)

Ascent: 1,200 ft (370m)

Enjoy panoramic views from St Catherine's Down and visit the medieval lighthouse known locally as the Pepperpot. Then take in the sea views as we walk along the coastal path passing through picturesque Steephill Cove to the sandy beach of Ventnor.

What your kids will love: Searching for crabs at Steephill Cove and making sandcastles on the beach at Ventnor.

Option 3 - The Donkey Sanctuary to Godshill

Distance: 3 miles (5km)

Ascent: 290 ft (90m)

We'll start with a visit to the Donkey Sanctuary, home to over 100 donkeys and Shetland ponies. There'll be plenty of time to meet the residents and enjoy refreshments at the cafe before walking to the romantic ruins of Appuldurcombe House - a great place for hide and seek. From here it is an easy walk to Godshill, where, if time allows, there is the Model Village to explore (payable locally). Entrance to the Donkey Sanctuary and Appuldurcombe House are both free.

What your kids will love: There are over 100 donkeys and ponies in residence at the Isle of Wight Donkey Sanctuary. Can you spot a donkey with the same name as you?

Option 4 - Chale Green to Ventnor via Whitwell

Distance: 10½ miles (17km)

Ascent: 1,470ft (450m)

This walk encompasses all the best bits of Option 3 but extends the journey inland to the charming village of Whitwell. We start at the village of Chale Green, ascend St Catherine's and head down and round St Catherine's Point. We'll continue to Whitwell and then rejoin the coastal path to Ventnor.

What your kids will love: Exploring beaches and playing in rock pools.

Day 3 Steam Trains & Dinosaurs

Option 1 - Over the hills to Sandown

Distance: 8 miles (12.5km)

Ascent: 550ft (180m)

Enjoy excellent views from Brading Down before we head to the historic village of Brading village where we'll join the same route as the option 2 walk.

What your kids will love: Reaching Yarborough Monument. Why not make a race of it and see who can be first to the finish line?

Option 2 - Romans and steam railways

Distance: 3 miles (5km)

Ascent: 320ft(100m)

Take a trip on the Isle of Wight steam railway before following a trail that takes us onto Brading Down for fabulous views. It's also home to one of the best-preserved Roman sites in the UK - Brading Roman Villa (payable locally).

What your kids will love: Riding a real steam train and finding out how good the Romans were at art with a visit to Brading Roman Villa. You can top it all by popping on a toga and dressing up as one of the ancient Romans that once lived here, too.

Option 3 - Windmills, wetlands, and dinosaurs

Distance: 6½ miles (10km)

Ascent: 600 feet (180m)

Bring your binoculars for a chance to spot dragonflies, lapwings and more in Brading Marshes Nature Reserve. Continuing to Bembridge, there's time to explore the island's last surviving windmill (payable locally) before some superb coastal walking that ends in Sandown and the chance to play on the beach or explore Dinosaur Isle (payable locally). Please note, we haven't included entry to the windmill as we know many of you are members of the National Trust, and are eligible for free entrance

What your kids will love: Climbing to top of a windmill, playing in its mud bakery, or stepping back in time at Dinosaur Isle – home to almost every newly discovered dinosaur in the British Isles.

Option 4 - Over the Chalk Downs

Distance: 10½ miles (17km)

Ascent: 950ft (280m)

Our longest option of the day is a walk along the valley before climbing up onto Brading Down. We'll walk along the chalk ridge, enjoying the views across the Solent to the mainland, before continuing over Culver Down and along the coastal path to Sandown.

What your kids will love: Looking out over the blue-green waters of the Solent. How many sailing yachts can you spot?

Day 4 The Yar Valley or Tennyson Trail

Option 1 - Yarmouth

Distance: 3½ miles (5.5km)

Ascent: 100ft (20m)

A gentle walk from Freshwater Bay House that follows the Yar Valley through a nature reserve. We'll walk along a disused railway line to the old harbour town of Yarmouth before an open-top bus ride back to Freshwater Bay.

What your kids will love: Keeping an eye out for red squirrels scurrying through the trees and raven, kestrel, buzzard, and barn owl soaring overhead. There'll also be plenty of time to explore Yarmouth where you can play on the green and visit the castle (free to English Heritage members or payable locally).

Option 2 - Compton Bay

Distance: 8½ miles (13.5km)

Ascent: 1000ft (300m)

Get that on-top-of-the-world feeling as we traverse the high point of the Downs east of Freshwater Bay. We'll then head to the beach and follow the coastal path back to Freshwater Bay House.

What your kids will love: Paddling at the beach and getting selfie-worthy views of the island's south-west coast as we walk over the chalk cliffs of Compton Down.

Option 3 - The Longstone

Distance: 11½ miles (18.5km)

Ascent: 1200ft (380m)

Our longest option is a walk over the Downs to the Neolithic Longstone. We'll then descend to the coast and follow the coastal path all the way back to Freshwater Bay.

What your kids will love: The Neolithic Longstone. According to legend this 13ft stone was thrown here by a giant. Keep your eyes peeled for fossilised forests and dino footprints at Hanover Point, too.

Option 4 - Yar Valley

Distance: 7 miles (11km)

Ascent: 350ft (120m)

We'll walk beside the tidal River Yar to the historic town of Yarmouth with its bustling harbour and Tudor castle. We'll return on the opposite side of the river back to Freshwater Bay.

What your kids will love: Making a game of who can spot the most wildlife as we walk through the salt marsh, reedbeds, and mud flats of the Yar Estuary.

Day 5 Departure Day

Depart after breakfast

Daily Walk Options



Easier Walks

Walk at a relaxed pace, often spending time at places of interest en-route. Walking experience isn't necessary as distances are quite short and gradients generally easy.

Accommodation

Freshwater Bay House

Chalky white cliffs and eyebrow-arching sea views set the tone for the delights that follow at this county house on the Isle of Wight - Queen Victoria's favourite island that's just a ferry hop from the South Coast. The location is as gorgeous as it gets; to the south of the village of Freshwater, within pebble-throwing distance of its namesake bay, and just a skip from Tennyson Down. You'll also be within easy reach of the area's showstoppers, including the imposing Stag and Mermaid rocks, the multi-coloured sands of Alum Bay, the remarkable Ventnor Botanic Gardens, and the 125-million-year-old dinosaur footprints at Compton Bay. And then, of course, there's the Needles Old Battery for the ubiquitous photo opportunity and the best views of The Needles.

Check-In & Check-Out

You are welcome to check in from 4pm at the earliest. HF Members can check in earlier, from 2pm. On arrival, you'll enjoy a complimentary cream tea and get to meet your fellow guests, our HF Holidays Leaders, and the rest of the friendly team. Check out 10am.

About

• 43 well-appointed guest rooms • Exclusive occupancy: 61 guests minimum • Check in from 4:00pm • For members check in from 2:00pm • Full-board (including cream tea on arrival) • Free Wi-Fi • Free on-site parking • Boot room and drying room • 2 travel cots & 4 high chairs • Discovery Point offering a wide range of local area maps, route guides, and information for self-guided walks • Books and games to borrow • Licensed bar • Three lounges • Garden • Electric vehicle charging point - Please note, you will need to bring your own cables to use this EV charging point



Food & drink

Seasonal dining, tailored for you

Our team of skilled chefs design our dinner menus to showcase the best of each season, from warming winter comfort food to vibrant summer dishes, including vegetarian, vegan and high-protein options. We also source fruit and vegetables within a 40-mile radius of each house, open every break with a Chef's Special menu inspired by dishes and flavours of the local area, and are able to adapt dishes to suit special dietary requirements.

Welcome Cream Tea

What better way to start your stay than with a cream tea, served fresh on arrival to make you feel instantly at home. A quintessentially English tradition, our scones are baked in-house and served with preserves and clotted cream, providing the perfect opportunity to meet fellow walkers.

A hearty breakfast to start the day

Start the day with a freshly-prepared cooked breakfast and a wide choice from our continental buffet, including hot drinks, juices and fresh fruit. Our team offer a quick and friendly service, leaving you fuelled and ready for your day's adventures.

Our famous picnic lunch

Our personalised picnic lunches are perfect for a day out walking, ready to enjoy when hunger strikes. Choose from a large selection of fresh sandwiches and salads, freshly baked cakes and snacks, including the ever-popular Freddos chocolate bar! Everything is designed to fit neatly into your rucksack, and all of the packaging we provide is recyclable or compostable.

3-course evening meals

Our à la carte evening menus feature a wide choice of starters, mains, and desserts, made with seasonal ingredients and, wherever possible, herbs and vegetables from our own gardens. Shared around sociable tables, dinners are relaxed occasions, with drinks available to order at the table or from the bar, and a traditional Sunday roast to round off the week.

Rooms

Designed with your comfort in mind, Freshwater Bay House has 43 well-appointed guest rooms available in three categories: Classic, Premium, and Superior.

Classic Rooms are comfortable en-suite guest rooms, ideal for a peaceful night's sleep. Amenities include free Wi-Fi, tea and coffee-making facilities, toiletries (hand wash, shampoo, and shower gel), and a TV.

Premium Rooms are more spacious en-suite guest rooms*. Amenities include free Wi-Fi, tea and coffee-making facilities, toiletries (hand wash, shampoo, body lotion, shower gel), and a 32-inch TV. Extras include bathrobes, slippers.

Superior Rooms are even more spacious en-suite guest rooms offering upgraded views of the surroundings*. Amenities include free Wi-Fi, tea and coffee-making facilities, toiletries (hand wash, shampoo, body lotion, shower gel), and a 32-inch TV. Extras include bathrobes, slippers.

We love: Rooms 19 and 20 on the first floor for their lovely sea views. Rooms 18 and 22 are both corner rooms overlooking the bay and Tennyson Downs. The more spacious Room 24 has five large windows overlooking the gardens and bay as well as a private sitting room. Room 39 on the second floor is a corner room with a bathtub.

The **Choose Your Room** service is available at our UK country houses, allowing you the option of choosing and confirming a specific room for an extra charge of £30 per room. This is subject to availability. Upgrade supplements apply.

Check in & check out

You are welcome to check in from **4:00pm at the earliest**. For members check in is available from **2:00pm (2026)**. On arrival, you'll enjoy a complimentary cream tea and get to meet your fellow guests, our HF Holidays Leaders, and the rest of the friendly team.

On the day of departure, we kindly ask all guests to check out by **10:00am**. You'll be asked to settle your bill prior to leaving. You may, of course, make a charitable donation to our HF Holidays Pathways Fund if you wish. Please note that we only accept card payments.

Room supplements

Superior	Premium single	Premium double/twin	Choose your room
£25 pppn	£20 pppn	£20 pppn	£30 per room

*Views and layout reflect each properties unique character and location

*Please note, pool opening hours are: 07:00am – 09:00am and 16:00pm – 18:30pm

Accessibility

For accessibility and assistance information, please contact our expert team on [020 3974 8865](tel:02039748865) or view the accessibility information online for [Freshwater Bay House](#)

About your stay

A warm welcome

We want you to feel comfortable from the moment you arrive. You'll find a welcome pack in your room with guest registration forms, menus, order forms for dinners and picnic lunches, the Wi-Fi password, and the front door code. Our houses are locked at night, so we recommend noting the Duty Manager's number on arrival in case of an emergency (or getting locked out).

Evening entertainment

While evening entertainment varies from house to house, HF Holidays Inter-House Quiz night held after dinner on Wednesdays is a weekly staple. Your HF Holidays leader may be around for tips on guided and self-guided walking routes as well as visit-worthy local attractions.

Walks talks

Our HF Holidays walk leaders host guided walking information briefings before dinner on guided walking holiday arrival days. This is followed by a group Walks Talk for information on the following day's guided walks (held before dinner every evening). Self-guided walking guests are, of course, welcome.

The walking day

Prior to setting off on guided walks, your HF Holidays Leader will run you through a short safety briefing. There's also an up-to-date weather forecast on display at the house to ensure you have appropriate clothing and footwear. If you choose to do your own walks or are on a self-guided walking holiday, we ask that you please complete an Independent Walker Card each day. These can be found near the Discovery Point in the house.

Accessibility

For accessibility and assistance information, please contact our expert team on [020 3974 8865](tel:02039748865) or view the accessibility information online for [Freshwater Bay House](#)

Travel Details

Address

Freshwater Bay House
Freshwater Bay
Isle of Wight PO40 9RB

Tel: [+44 \(0\)1983 753854](tel:+44(0)1983753854)

By taxi

From Yarmouth ferry port it's a five-mile taxi journey that takes approximately 15 minutes. We recommend booking your taxi at least seven days in advance as availability may be limited.

For pricing, please contact the taxi company directly.

Taxi companies in the area include:

Bay Taxi

Tel: [+44 \(0\)7475 662350](tel:+44(0)7475662350)

Rayner's Taxis

Tel: [+44 \(0\)1983 752784](tel:+44(0)1983752784)

I Cabs

Tel: [+44 \(0\)7553 567567](tel:+44(0)7553567567)

A return journey can be arranged on your behalf by the HF Holidays House Manager at Freshwater Bay.

*HF Holidays does not own or manage any of the above taxi companies.

By Bus

From Yarmouth there are public buses – please check timetables <https://www.islandbuses.info/>

By train

The nearest station is Lymington Pier on the mainland which is adjacent to the ferry terminal.

Check National Rail for train times and routes.

By ferry

You have two ferry options. The Wightlink Lymington to Yarmouth ferry is the most convenient for Freshwater Bay. Should you wish to take the bus from Yarmouth, rather than taxi, the Needles Breezer bus stop is a 2min walk from the ferry terminal, and buses run hourly to Freshwater Bay, a 5min walk to Freshwater Bay House. Alternatively, the Red Funnel Southampton to East Cowes ferry is often the cheapest option if you want to take your car to the Isle of Wight.

HF Holidays member discount

If you're a member, you can **get 15% off car travel and 20% off foot travel** with Wightlink Ferry. For full details visit www.wightlink.co.uk/HFHolidays.

By car

From Yarmouth

Turn right out of the ferry terminal onto the A3054 and cross the bridge. After one mile, turn left down Pixley Hill, signposted Freshwater Bay. Turn left at Freshwater Garage and continue along Afton Road. At the lifeboat station turn right and follow the road round. Freshwater Bay House is on your left.

From East Cowes

Follow signs for Newport, taking the A3021 and then A3054. Continue through Newport and Carisbrooke. Turn left onto the B3401 through Calbourne. At the junction with Afton Road (A3055), turn left and then right by the lifeboat station, and follow the road round to Freshwater Bay House.

Or you can leave your car on the mainland (there's a pay and display car park at Lymington Pier) and travel on the ferry as a foot passenger.

By air

The nearest airport is Southampton Airport.

From Southampton Airport Parkway station (adjacent to the airport terminal) there are regular trains to Lymington Pier, taking about 40 minutes. From here, you'll need to catch the ferry over to the Isle of Wight.

Otherwise, the best options are London Heathrow or London Gatwick airports for connecting trains to Lymington Pier.

Check National Rail for the best routes and train times.

Local Area

Whether you're enjoying a guided or self-guided walking holiday, there's always the opportunity to linger for longer. Here's our pick of the very best things to see and do within easy travelling distance of Freshwater Bay House.

Freshwater Bay

Just a skip away from Freshwater Bay House, this semi-circular namesake bay surrounded by gleaming white cliffs is a magical spot for rock pooling, watersports, swimming, boating, walking, and more. While mostly pebbles, there are some sandy parts on its eastern side.

The Needles

Named for their pointy shape, this iconic trio of brilliant white chalk rocks are located on the island's western tip. They lead out to what is easily Britain's most photographed lighthouse – a red-and-white-striped tower built in 1859 on the outermost of the chalk rocks.

Yarmouth

An hour's walk away, this historic seaside town is set at the mouth of the River Yar. The highlight is the 16th century Yarmouth Castle – one of Henry VIII's most sophisticated coastal fortresses built to guard the western entrance to the Solent.

Osborne House

Just a 40-minute drive away, this former royal retreat was purchased by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert in 1845 and used to escape court life. Now managed by English Heritage, it charms with glorious gardens and rooms filled with original furniture and works of art.

Carisbrooke Castle

What was once an artillery fortress, king's prison, and royal summer residence is located near Newport in the heart of the island. Not-to-be-missed attractions at this medieval stunner include King Charles I's bowling green and the lovely Princess Beatrice Garden.

Alum Bay

Cherished for its multi-coloured sands and stunning views across the Solent, Alum Bay delights with crystal-clear waters that are perfect for swimming and paddling. Don't leave without buying a souvenir filled with this world-famous sand that comes in 21 shades.

Isle of Wight Steam Railway

Following a five-mile countryside route Smallbrook Junction to Wootton, this lovingly restored vintage steam train is an award-winning attraction. Hop off at the rural stations and learn about 150 years of railways history at the Train Story Discovery Centre.

Blackgang Chine

Perfect for those with children in tow, this family-run fantasy theme park dating back to 1843 is the oldest in the UK. Highlights include life-sized pirate ships, fairy castles, an underwater kingdom, and a cowboy town where kids can choose to be chose to be an outlaw or sheriff.

Ventnor Botanic Gardens

A 30-minute drive away, this botanical wonderland is home to around 6000 species of rare and exotic plants and trees in 22 acres. The warm climate attracts some amazing wildlife, including wall lizards, slow worms, and even Iberian ants.

Bembridge Windmill

Built in the early 1700s and closed in 1913, the last surviving windmill on the island was famously featured in a 1795 watercolour by JMW Turner. This much-loved local landmark was donated to the National Trust in 1961 still has most of its original machinery intact.

Useful Holiday Information

The UK has a famously unpredictable climate so it's best to be prepared for weather that's sunny one minute and raining the next. To make it easier, here's a list of items you should consider packing.

Essentials

- Suitable footwear such as waterproof walking boots that provide ankle support and good grip
- Waterproof and windproof jacket
- Comfortable clothing (jeans & waterproof capes are not suitable)
- Mid-layer(s) to keep you warm. Fleece makes a good choice
- Waterproof overtrousers
- Gloves and a warm hat
- Rucksack with waterproof liner
- Flask for hot drinks
- Water bottle (at least 1 litre capacity)
- Sunscreen
- UV sunglasses

For holidays operating October through to the end of March, please also bring the following on your walks:

- spare warm clothing
- spare high energy food
- head torch and spare batteries
- please note for the October to March season your waterproof jacket needs to offer a high level of waterproofing and wind resistance, and a hood. Look for a waterproof jacket with sealed/taped seams and a minimum HH (hydrostatic head - this is the rating given on waterproof jackets) of 10,000mm+

Recommended

- Several base layers (long-sleeve or short-sleeve)
- Cushioned walking socks to avoid blisters
- First aid kit, including plasters and insect repellent and tick remover tool
- Sit mat
- Waterproof pouch for valuables
- Rubbish bag (remember to always leave no trace)
- Wallet/purse
- Camera
- Walking poles

Trip Information

Who's the boss? Please note that parents are responsible for their children at all times; our leaders are not permitted to run activities without other adults present. All leaders undergo a thorough assessment so you can relax and enjoy your holiday knowing that you are in safe hands.

On the first evening of your holiday, your leaders give a short talk about safety on walks which we would like you to attend. Walks may be changed for safety reasons and are subject to a maximum and a minimum number of guests. Leaders always consider the safety of the group as a whole and may need to alter or curtail the walk if the conditions dictate. Your leader may refuse to accept a guest while clothing, equipment, or behaviour is unsuitable. In the event of a problem, all leaders carry a mobile phone, first aid kit, group shelter, spare maps, and a compass.

Please note: If you choose to leave the group your leader is no longer responsible for you.

If you have a particular health condition or disability please put this on your guest registration form. This information will be confidential to your leaders and the house manager, but leaders do need to take account of any issues when planning walks.

Kids on their own: Any teenager aged 14 years or over can leave you at the starting line and join a walk unaccompanied on the basis they can look after themselves. Children under 14 will need to be accompanied by an adult on walks; however, this does not need to be a parent or legal guardian.

Please note, coaches used on this holiday all comply with UK law, and may not have seat belts suitable for children. Where children are under 3yrs of age, they must not travel in the front seat on coaches, nor on the back seat of coaches. For more information please visit: <https://www.gov.uk/child-car-seats-the-rules/when-a-child-can-travel-without-a-car-seat>

Tripnote validity

TRIP NOTE VALIDITY These Trip Notes are valid based on the date printed at the bottom of the page. They will occasionally be updated post booking and pre-departure. We will send you the latest trip notes prior to departure through a link in your pre departure documents or we can send you a copy in the post if preferred. In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any doubt about your suitability you should call HF Holidays and ask to speak to one of the team about this itinerary. The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; so please be prepared to be flexible where necessary. At times, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned due to weather conditions, political, physical or other factors. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

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