

7 Night Isle of Wight Gentle Guided Walking Holiday

Trip style: Gentle guided walking

Destination: 📍 Isle of Wight

Trip code: FRW07-BEW01

Trip Walking Grade: ul 1 & 2

Carbon Footprint: 🌳 159kg CO2



Holiday Overview

For golden sand beaches, rolling green hills, dramatic white cliffs, ancient woodland, and bags of Victorian charm, the Isle of Wight is the perfect island escape. Ideal for those wanting to discover its charms at a more relaxed pace, this gentle guided walking holiday rewards with breathtaking trails, big-name historic attractions, comfortable accommodation, and more. You'll also enjoy a choice of up to three different-grade daily walks, including a gentle walk of three to four miles.

WHAT YOU'LL LOVE

- Discovering the stunning landscape of the Isle of Wight on foot
- Soaking up panoramic views of the dramatic coastline
- Visiting golden sand beaches and picturesque villages
- Spending time with like-minded people in the great outdoors
- Finding new routes and places to explore with your HF Holidays Leader
- Staying at Freshwater Bay House, just a skip from Tennyson Down

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- En-suite accommodation in our 4-star country house
- Cream tea on arrival day
- Cooked or continental breakfast every morning
- Daily packed lunches
- Three-course evening meals, plus tea & coffee
- Guided walking with experienced HF Holidays Leaders
- Choice of three guided walks (each walking day) from March to October, and two from November to February
- All transport to and from walks where necessary
- Easy-to-follow routes, maps, and information in our Discovery Point if you want to explore independently
- Get 15% off car travel and 20% off foot travel via www.wightlink.co.uk/HFHolidays

WALKING GRADES AND OPTIONS

This trip is graded Activity Level 1 and 2.

This easier variation of our best-selling Guided Walking holidays is the perfect way to enjoy a gentle exploration of the Isle of Wight. The choice of up to three guided walks including a walk of 3 or 4 miles.

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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. Enjoy a complimentary cream tea at 16:30 and meet other guests.

Day 2 Tennyson Down and Alum Bay

Option 1 - Alum Bay and the Downs

Distance: 4¼ miles (6.5km)

Ascent: 820 feet (250m)

In summary: Explore Alum Bay and the Needles Old Battery and New Battery before a glorious walk atop the chalk cliffs of Tennyson Down, offering magnificent views over the western half of the island

Highlights: Alum Bay with its coloured sands. The sand was once used for sand painting pictures, a popular craft in Victorian times.

Option 2 - Over Tennyson Down

Distance: 7 miles (11km)

Ascent: 1,200 feet (360m)

In summary: A fabulous walk over the chalk cliffs of Tennyson Down to the Needles and the Alum Bay; one of England's finest coastal walks.

Highlights: The commanding view over the Western Solent from the Tennyson Monument. You'll also discover the once secret rocket testing range, and the area's role in the space race.

Option 3 - Tennyson Down and the Needles

Distance: 8 miles (13km)

Total ascent: 1,500 feet (460m)

In summary: Head to the coast at Totland Bay then soak up glorious sea view as you round the Needles headland and return over Tennyson Down.

Highlight: The heather-clad headland of Headon Warren is a real delight, and offers the best views of the Needles.

Day 3 Calbourne to Freshwater Bay

Option 1 - Mottistone Down via Downton

Distance: 8 miles (13km)

Ascent: 900 feet (280m)

In summary: From Winkle Street ascend over the Downs, descending Mottistone Down to the south coast. We then follow the coastal path back to Freshwater Bay.

Highlights: The final section over Compton Down enjoys splendid views over Freshwater Bay, and back along the island's southwest coast.

Option 2 - The Long Stone & Brighstone

Distance: 3 miles (5km)

Ascent: 310 feet (95m)

In summary: Walk over Mottistone Down to the Long Stone, a neolithic long barrow and ancient meeting point, then on over Grammar Common to Brighstone village.

Highlights: Legend has it that St Catherine and the Devil had a contest to see who should control the Isle of Wight. The Long Stone's tall sandstone pillar was supposedly thrown by St Catherine.

Option 3 - Wooded Trails & Grassy Downs

Distance: 7¼ miles (13km)

Ascent: 750 feet (280m)

In summary: Starting from Calbourne, the prettiest village on the island, we follow the footpath passing Winkle Street, and then ascending on to Westover Down before crossing countryside following the Tennyson Trail back to Freshwater Bay.

Highlight: Visiting the postcard village of Calbourne and enjoying breathtaking views of land and sea while walking along the Downs.

Day 4 Free Day - Isle of Wight

Discover more about [Freshwater Bay House and the local area](#) for ideas on how to make the most of your free day.

Day 5 Shorwell and Carisbrooke Castle

Option 1 - Around Carisbrooke

Distance: 3 miles (4.5km)

Ascent: 350ft (100m)

We'll follow the Shepherd's Trail through the fields and along an ancient trackway to Carisbrooke Castle. If you'd like to visit the castle (payable locally), please check out the English Heritage website as they often run special events in the summer, some of which you will need to prebook. We haven't included the cost of entrance as we know many of you are English Heritage members already and will benefit from free or reduced-price entry.

What your kids will love: The fairytale-feel of exploring mighty Carisbrooke Castle. Have fun dressing up as Norman soldiers, walk the battlements to discover how cannons are fired, and relive an age of knights, broadswords, and battles.

Option 2 - Shorwell to Carisbrooke

Distance: 5 miles (8km)

Ascent: 550 feet (160m)

In summary: Starting in the village of Shorwell the walk heads over the downs to Carisbrooke Castle and the town of Carisbrooke.

Highlight: Snapping shots of picturesque Shorwell with its thatched cottages and historic church.

Option 3 - Downs and lanes via Brighstone to Carisbrooke Castle

Distance: 9 miles (14km)

Ascent: 1100 feet (340m)

In summary: Starting the walk from the coast, we ascend through Brighstone and Shorwell before crossing more countryside until we arrive at Carisbrooke Castle.

Highlight: Enjoy views of the coast, and the south of the Isle of Wight before exploring the historic roots of the Carisbrooke Castle.

Day 6 Walks through the Undercliff

Option 1 - Bonchurch To The Botanic Gardens

Distance: 3 miles (4.5km)

Ascent: 300 feet (80m)

In summary: Our walk starts by visiting the village of Bonchurch. We then walk the promenade before reaching the classic Victorian seaside resort of Ventnor. We then take the coastal path past Steephill Cove on our way to complete our walk at the botanic gardens at Ventnor.

Highlights: Bonchurch is a very old village, known to be inhabited in prehistoric times. Many well-known literary figures have lived in Bonchurch, including Tennyson, Macauley, Dickens, Thackeray and Elizabeth Sewell.

Option 2 - Through the Undercliff

Distance: 6 miles (10km)

Ascent: 600 feet (180m)

In summary: Follow the coast along the Undercliff from St Catherine's Point to Ventnor's Botanic Gardens.

Highlight: Walking through the lush vegetation of this natural suntrap

Option 3 - St Catherines Point to Ventnor Coast via Niton

Distance: 7½ miles (12km)

Ascent: 800ft (240m)

This walk also starts from above St Catherines point with fantastic views from cliffs over St Catherines lighthouse. You then head inland to visit the delightful villages of Niton and Whitwell. The walk rejoins the Coastal path at the Undercliff and continues along the coast to Ventnor Botanic Gardens.

Day 7 The Yar Valley

Option 1 - Yar Valley

Distance: 7 miles (11km)

Ascent: 350 feet (120m)

In summary: 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.

Highlights: The salt marsh, reedbeds and mud flats of the Yar Estuary are a great place to see wildfowl and waders.

Option 2 – Yarmouth

Distance: 3½ miles (5.5km)

Ascent: 150 feet (60m)

In summary: Walk beside the tidal River Yar to the historic town of Yarmouth. Take time to explore the cobbled streets and quaint shops and cafes, before catching the Breezer bus back to Freshwater Bay.

Highlights: Opened in 1876, Yarmouth Pier is the UK's longest wooden pier and stretches 186 metres into the Solent.

Option 3 – Yar Valley and The Three Forts

Distance: 8 miles (13km)

Ascent: 550 feet (180m)

In summary: Walk through Golden Hill Country Park to the coast at Fort Victoria with uninterrupted views across the Solent to Hurst Castle on the mainland. Continue on the Coastal Path into the old port of Yarmouth and return to Freshwater beside the River Yar.

Highlight: A walk full of history from the Victorian forts at Golden Hill & Fort Victoria to the remains of Henry VIII's castle at Yarmouth.

Day 8 Departure Day

Enjoy a leisurely breakfast before making your way home.

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. Fleeces make 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

Walks may be changed for safety reasons and are subject to a maximum and 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 where 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. Please carry a copy of these trip notes with you, or note down the contact phone number for your accommodation (details in the travel section) should you need them in case of emergency.

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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