

Best of the Isle of Man Guided Trail

Tour Style: Guided walking

Destinations: England & United Kingdom

Trip code: ZMLDW

Trip Walking Grade: 3



HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

Almost equidistant between England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, the Isle of Man is a UNESCO Biosphere Region of fascinating history and phenomenal coast and countryside. Walk the best of the Raad ny Foillan (Way of the Gull) trail, where highlights include spending time in Castletown, visiting charming Peel, and discovering the island's Viking and Celtic past.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Comfortable en-suite rooms in our partner accommodation(s)
- Cooked or continental breakfast every morning
- Daily packed lunches
- Three-course evening meals, plus tea & coffee
- Guided walks with an experienced HF Holidays Leader
- All transport to and from walks where necessary
- Return flights from London Heathrow including hold baggage and airport transfers

HOLIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Walking the best sections of the Raad ny Foillan (Way of the Gull) Trail
- Riding the historic tram along the coast from Douglas to Laxey
- Exploring the small winding streets of Castletown
- Discovering heritage sites and ancient monuments
- Relaxing on the soft golden sands of Port Erin Beach
- Admiring dramatic coastal and countryside scenery

TRIP SUITABILITY

This Guided Walking /Hiking Trail is graded 3 which involves walks/hikes on well defined paths, though often in hilly or upland areas, or along rugged coastal footpaths. These may be rough and steep in sections and will require a good level of fitness and some confidence in footing during both ascent and descent. It is your responsibility to ensure you have the relevant fitness and equipment required to join this holiday. Coastal paths such as this one often feature a considerable amount of ascent and descent due to the nature of the coast, so you should be prepared for this. A sustained effort is required to complete this holiday and provision cannot be made for anyone who opts out. Please be sure you can manage the mileage and ascent in the daily itineraries. The walking day is normally 6 to 7 hours. 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 terrain. Other exercises such as cycling, jogging and swimming are also excellent for developing increased stamina.

Your fitness

Having a solid base of fitness before your holiday will ensure you've the best chance of completing the holiday and enjoying it to boot. Here's a few simple tips to help you get fit and ready for your challenge:

- Get out walking - whether the weather, get out there, and start building your fitness months before your holiday
- Build your distance gradually and get a number of 6-8hr hill days in
- Ideally, try and do two consecutive days training if possible
- Take the stairs every time
- Train on different terrain
- Train with your day pack and your walking boots too, to ensure they're well worn in before your holiday
- Other sports help improve your walking fitness too. The best ones are jogging, cycling, swimming, which will build your stamina, and yoga which will help strengthen your core and improve balance
- Time training will help ensure you enjoy your holiday to the max.



ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrival Day

Check in at The Ascot Hotel is available from 15:00 hours. Your leader will be at reception at 18:30 to meet the group and for a quick introduction to the holiday before dinner.

Day 2: Ballaglass Glen To Ramsey

Our day starts with a journey on the Manx Electric Railway, travelling from Douglas to Ballaglass Glen just under an hour away. Our first stop is the Ballafayle Cairn and a Quaker burial ground. This section, and down to Port Mooar, is on a narrow minor road with flower displays for most of the year. We then head to Maughold Head and its associated church, where it's well worth stopping to look at the historic Celtic crosses. The headland and onward path to Ramsey provides coastal scenery, promising views over to the Lake District and Scotland on a clear day. We'll have time to explore at Ramsey before taking the tram back to Douglas.

8 miles (12.5km) with 900 feet (275m) of ascent

Day 3: To Ancient Castletown

This section of the coast path skirts around coves and follows beaches, to end at Castletown, the old capital of the Isle of Man, with winding narrow streets, medieval castle and harbour. Taking in Santon Head, Port Soldrick and passing the airport, we head to Derby Haven, once the island's chief fishing port, before we explore the peninsula of Langness and St Michael's island; a small grassy appendage with Derby Fort and ruins of St Michael's chapel.

10½ miles (16.5km) with 800 feet (240m) of ascent

Day 4: Port St Mary To Port Erin

We leave Port St Mary with its pretty harbour and climb through patchwork pastureland with great views ahead and behind. We pass The Anvil and Sugar Loaf and The Chasms with breathtaking scenery unfolding as we head towards the Calf of Man and Spanish Head, the most southerly point on the Raad ny Foillan.

Dropping down into Calf Sound, where if we're lucky we might see some seals, we continue on the undulating coastal path with views of Braddha Head and Port Erin. Port Erin had its heyday in Victorian times and has a picturesque bay and refreshments and shops.

8 miles (13km) with 1,300 feet (390m) of ascent

Day 5: Free Day

Today no walks are organised, allowing you to explore on your own. You may wish to walk or take the mountain railway to the top of Snaefell, visit the Great Laxey Wheel, discover the island's Viking and Celtic past at the Manx Museum, or perhaps explore medieval Castle Rushen.

Day 6: West Coast To Niarbyl

Departing from Fleshwick Bay, we will have a couple of significant climbs today, but the dramatic clifftop coastal scenery is worth every step. We'll also visit Cronk ny Arrey Laa with its prehistoric burial mound and Millennium Cross – the highest point on the Raad ny Foillan at 1,434 feet above sea level. Our destination is Niarbyl Bay where we'll be rewarded with scenes of charming thatched cottages clinging to the hillsides, fantastic views over the Irish Sea, and abundance of wildlife.

7½ miles (11.5 km) with 2,500 feet (750m) of ascent and descent

Day 7: Tynwald To Peel

We start our walk with a visit to St John's Church and Tynwald Hill, where we find out about their significance in the governance of the island. The walk takes a pleasant rising traverse around the southern flank of Slieau Whallian, through pleasant pastureland down to the pretty village of Glen Maye. The descent through Glen Maye is like walking through the Hanging Gardens of Babylon. Its beautiful sheltered, fern-filled woodland include some relics of the ancient forests that once covered the island. The walk along the cliffs is followed by a spectacular descent into Peel, where we end our week. Here we should have time to explore the castle and parts of the town, as well as taking the opportunity to buy some of the famous Manx kippers as an edible souvenir of your holiday.

9 miles (14.5km) with 1170 feet (356m) of ascent and descent

Day 8: Departure Day

Enjoy a leisurely breakfast before making your way home.

ACCOMMODATION

Ascot Hotel, Douglas - Best Of Isle Of Man

The Ascot Hotel is a warm, friendly and contemporary hotel which enjoys a fantastic location just 100 yards off Douglas Sea Front and Promenade. All hotel rooms are en-suite with overhead shower, tea and coffee tray, remote control Flat Screen TV, Wi-Fi, iron and ironing board, in-room safes and hairdryer. A free tea and coffee machine for all guests can be found in the restaurant. Check-in is available from 3pm

Food & Drink

Your stay is full-board. This includes daily breakfasts, packed lunch options, and evening meals. Vegetarian choices and dietary requirements can be catered for (please give advance notice when booking).

Packed Lunches

Our packed lunches will be too much food for some and not enough for others; if you feel you might need more food during the walk, please bring a supply of snacks to supplement this – it won't always be possible to buy these on the route. Your packed lunches will include: a bread sandwich or roll with a choice of filling; some fresh fruit; fruit cake/flapjack or similar, crisps and/or biscuits. For those of you tackling a level 4 or above holiday, we would highly recommend bringing some trail mix or something similar to ensure you've some fuel in reserve should you need it.

Dietary Requirements

Our partner hotels can cater for most dietary requirements, but it is important you advise us of any allergies and dietary restrictions you have at the time of booking.

TRAVEL DETAILS

By Air

Our 'with flight' holiday includes group return flights from London to the Isle of Man. For flight times and prices please follow the booking process. If you choose this option, we automatically include return transfers between the airport and hotel. The transfer to your hotel takes approx. 30 minutes.

If you prefer to book the holiday without flights and make your own travel arrangements, there are plenty of flight options from UK regional airports to the Isle of Man. You can reach the hotel from the airport by taxi (cost approx. £25) or bus. Bus No1 & No 2 stop 50 metres from the hotel at the Queens Promenade, bus stop number 6. Buses run approx. every £20 minutes and cost approx. £4.

All passengers aged 16 and over are required to provide photographic ID at the check-in desk and at the departure gate."

By Ferry

The Steam Packet Company operates ferry services to the Isle of Man from Heysham and Liverpool. Choose between the conventional ferry, the Ben-myChree, which operates all year from Heysham or the fast craft, Manannan, which runs between March and November from Liverpool. Discounted train and ferry inclusive fares are available through www.loco2.com. For more information, please see the Steam Packet Company's website: [Sail & Rail Tickets to/from Isle of Man | Isle of Man Ferries \(steam-packet.com\)](http://www.steam-packet.com).

USEFUL HOLIDAY INFORMATION

Holiday Information

Our **Best of the Isle of Man** holiday enjoys some of the most spectacular sections of The Raad ny Foillan or 'The Way of the Gull', and includes the option of a trip up the highest mountain Snaefell on your free day.

Enjoy cliff top walking, quaint seaside villages, high peaks and sandy beaches.

The Isle of Man in the Irish Sea measures 33 miles by 14 miles and is geographically part of the British Isles, although not part of the United Kingdom. You'll find evidence of the Isle of Man's fascinating history which begins with the Mesolithic times; its fascinating geology; a wealth of wild flowers; as well as the abundant birdlife.

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

Essential 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. Fleeeces make a good choice
- Waterproof overtrousers
- Gloves and a warm hat
- Rucksack with waterproof liner
- Spotting scope and/or binoculars
- Flask for hot drinks
- Water bottle (at least 1 litre capacity)
- Sunscreen
- UV sunglasses

Recommended

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

Useful Information

Isle of Man has its own currency. This currency is sterling but is not accepted in the rest of the British Isles. British pounds are accepted just like anywhere else in the UK and change given can be a mixture of British and Isle of Man money. Should you need to change back any currency; notes can be exchanged at UK banks.

Suggested Reading and Maps

Your leader will carry all the necessary maps and guides. For your own interest you may consider looking at some of the following:

The Isle of Man Coastal path by Alan Cooper

Isle of Man Cicerone Guide by Aileen Evans

OS Landranger No 95 Isle of Man

Isle of Man Outdoor Leisure Maps 1:25,000 x 2. North and South

Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is an essential requirement for this holiday. Isle of Man has a reciprocal health agreement with the UK, which means that emergency treatment is free, but you'll have to pay to see a GP and you won't be covered for the cost of returning to the UK (repatriation) or routine monitoring of existing conditions.

Our experienced and knowledgeable volunteer leaders undergo a thorough assessment to lead you on your holiday and are 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.

In The Event Of A Problem

If you become separated from your group, 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 and 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.

If you have any cause for complaints regarding accommodation, you should notify your leader who can then attempt to rectify the problem.

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.

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.

Document produced: 12-06-2024

