

Cape Wrath Classic Guided Trail

Tour Style: Guided Trails

Destination: Scotland

Trip code: XILDW

Trip Walking Grade: 4



HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

Our Cape Wrath Classic route takes a selection of the best bits of this fantastic wilderness, walking from Cape Wrath to end in the fishing village of Lochinver. You'll enjoy a genuine wilderness experience coupled with warm highland hospitality and a chance to see a fantastic range of wildlife. Cape Wrath - the most north-westerly point in Britain. Sandwood Bay - one of the most beautiful beaches in Britain. Ascend the spectacular pyramid of Ben Stack. Visit the bird reserve on Handa Island and walk beneath the majestic Suilven.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Group transfers to and from Inverness railway station or airport
- Boat charters for Handa Island and on Glendhu Loch
- Ferry across Kyle of Durness and minibus to Cape Wrath
- Full Board en-suite accommodation
- Experienced HF Holidays Walking Leader
- All transport to and from the walks
- Luggage transfer between accommodation

HOLIDAYS HIGHLIGHTS

- Wilderness Walking from Cape Wrath through to Lochinver
- Cape Wrath - mainland Britain's most north-westerly point
- Handa Island Bird Reserve
- The dramatic mountains of Ben Stack and Suilven

TRIP SUITABILITY

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. 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.



ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrival Day

Join us in Inverness for a group transfer to your accommodation. This takes approx 2hrs30 and includes a short stop on the way. We pick up from Inverness railway station at 1530. A pickup from Inverness airport is also possible (1500) if this is booked 8 weeks in advance.

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: Highlights Of Durness

Our first day gives us a chance to familiarise with the area and the type of walking we can expect for the next two days. We start on the coast just east of Durness and explore the abandoned township of Ceannabeine, before heading steeply up Beinn Ceannabeinne itself with stunning views in all directions. Taking an easier route down, we head for the famous Smoo Cave and the beautiful coastal scenery of the area. Passing the delightful Sango Sands beach and the village of Durness, we finish our walk at Balnakeil Craft Village to maybe enjoy a hot chocolate at Cocoa Mountain, or have a paddle on Balnakeil Beach.

8½ miles (13.5km) with 1,600 feet (490m) of ascent.

Day 3: 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 1,500 feet (450m) of ascent.

Day 4: 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.

7½ miles (12.5 km) with 2,500 feet (760m) of ascent.

Day 5: 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 (13km) with 1,320 feet (400m) of ascent.

Day 6: Handa Island

A short ferry crossing takes you to this RSPB 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 7: Bealach Na H-Uidhe

A walk from Loch an Gainmhich 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 8: 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 9: Departure Day

Transfer back to Inverness airport and rail station.

ACCOMMODATION

Rhiconich Hotel - Cape Wrath Classic

Situated just 13 miles south of Cape Wrath and overlooking Loch Inchar, the Rhiconich Hotel offers a warm welcome and excellent food. There is a lounge and public bar, an upstairs dining area that makes the most of the views across the loch and a residents' reception room with a log fire. The surrounding area is remote stalking and fishing country, the nearest village being the fishing port of Kinlochbervie, 6 miles away. All rooms are en-suite with tea and coffee making facilities, hairdryer, TV and WiFi. There is a small drying room for clothes and boots

Inchnadamph Hotel - Cape Wrath Classic

Inchnadamph means 'meeting place of the deer' and you'll see plenty of red deer here. The rather isolated Inchnadamph Hotel lies at the foot of the main mountains of Assynt such as Ben More Assynt and Conival and nearby are the well-known 'Bone Caves', where relics of lynx, arctic fox, reindeer, polar bear and human skeletons have been found. The area is also a mecca for geologists. The hotel offers a public and residents' dining area along with a popular walkers' bar. Many rooms have views out to Quinag. Rooms have tea and coffee making facilities and hairdryer (on request). There are no TV facilities at this hotel, limited WiFi and very poor mobile phone reception. Drying facilities for clothing and boots is excellent.

USEFUL HOLIDAY INFORMATION

Holiday Information

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.

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.

Food & Transport

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.

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

Joining Instructions

Holiday Start

Your holiday starts in Inverness. Our group transfer will collect you from Inverness Rail Station at:

- 3.30pm. Your HF Holidays leader will be at the meeting point in the station near WHSmiths.

A pick up is also available from Inverness airport (3.00pm) - this is **only available if you have pre-booked**. To pre-book, please let us know at least 8 weeks before your holiday start date, by contacting us on 0208 732 1250 or e-mail trails@hfholidays.co.uk. The airport pick-up point is in front of the Terminal Building. Look out for someone holding an HF Holidays sign.

If you will not be using our transfer please let us know (contact details above), 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 route planning by train visit www.nationalrail.co.uk or call 03457 484950.

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.

Essential Information

Essential Equipment

To enjoy walking/hiking comfortably and safely, footwear, clothing and equipment needs to be suitable for the conditions. Safety and comfort are our priorities, 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
- Waterproof 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
- Warm hat and gloves. Gaiters are an optional but useful extra
- Denim jeans and capes are not suitable on any walks
- Rucksack with a waterproof liner
- Thermos flask for hot drink
- Water bottle (at least 1 litres)
- Spare high-energy food such as a chocolate bar
- Small torch
- First aid kit – your leader's first aid kit doesn't contain any medication or blister kits (such as Compeed)

Optional Equipment

- Walking poles are useful, particularly for descents
- Insect repellent
- Sun hat
- Sunglasses
- Sun cream
- Camera

Trip Information

Travel Insurance

We strongly recommend that you take out travel insurance and any other personal insurance relevant to you and the holiday. It is particularly important with the possibility of flight changes and cancellations due to the challenging weather conditions that can occur on the islands and might impact your onward travel arrangements.

Useful Information

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.

Our experienced and knowledgeable volunteer leaders undergo a thorough assessment to lead you on your Guided Walking/Hiking Trail 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 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.

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:

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

HOW TO BOOK

When you're ready to book, you can choose to **book online** or book **over the phone**. Our website offers secure online booking for our holidays, is available 24/7, and offers more in-depth information about all our holidays. If you prefer to call us, our experienced and knowledgeable team are available to answer any specific questions you have and can offer guidance as to which holiday is best suited to your needs.

Our office is open: Monday to Friday: 9am – 7pm Saturday: 9am – 1pm Sunday & Bank Holiday Monday: closed

PAYING YOUR DEPOSIT

To secure the holiday of your choice, you will need to pay a deposit: UK & European Holidays: £150 per person and Worldwide Holidays: £250 per person. You can pay your deposit by debit or credit card with no additional card fees charged or make an online BACS payment directly into HF's bank account, please see details under BACS payments. You can also pay your deposit by cheque within seven days of booking. Cheques should be made payable to 'HF Holidays Ltd' with your booking reference / Order ID on the back.

NON-MEMBER FEE

Non-members can join our holidays by paying a Non-Member's fee of £20 per person per holiday. Alternatively, full membership is available from £100 – visit hfholidays.co.uk/membership for details.

BACS PAYMENTS

Please quote your booking reference / Order ID when you make your payment online: Bank Name: Svenska Handelsbanken AB (publ) Account Name: HF Holidays Ltd Account Number: 35923304 Sort Code: 40-51-62 IBAN: GB92HAND40516235923304 Swift / Bic Code: HANDGB22

Once we have received your booking and deposit, we will send a confirmation invoice to the lead name. Please check this carefully. For bookings 'with flights' it is essential that the names on your booking

confirmation invoice match those on your passport for bookings overseas. Please advise us immediately of any errors. Any name changes after the balance of your holiday has been paid will be subject to a fee levied by the airline.

MANAGE MY BOOKINGS

Payments can also be made through the Manage My Booking function on our website. Click on the link at the top of our homepage. This is available to all customers who provide an email address at the time of booking.

YOUR FINAL BALANCE

The balance is due 10 weeks before departure. As with paying your deposit, you can pay your final balance by debit or credit card, make an online BACS payment directly into HF's bank account or pay by cheque.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Travel insurance is an important part of any booking and essential for one of our holidays. HF Holidays works with specialist. Insurance Brokers Campbell Irvine Direct. For more information or to obtain a quote call them on 01702 427 236 or visit hfholidays.co.uk/insurance

PEACE OF MIND

ATOL:

The air holidays and flights in this brochure are ATOL-protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 710. In the unlikely event of our insolvency, the CAA will ensure that you are not stranded abroad and will arrange to refund any money you have paid us for advance bookings. For further information visit the ATOL website atol.org.uk

MEMBER OF ABTOT:

HF Holidays is a member of ABTOT (The Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited) which provides financial protection under the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992 for HF Holidays Ltd and in the event of their insolvency, protection is provided for the following: 1. non-flight packages commencing in and returning to the UK; 2. non-flight packages commencing and returning to a country other than the UK; 3. flight inclusive packages that commence outside of the UK and Republic of Ireland, which are sold to customers outside of the UK and Republic of Ireland. 1, 2 and 3 provides for a refund in the event you have not yet travelled. 1 and 3 provides for repatriation. Please note that bookings made outside the UK and Republic of Ireland are only protected by ABTOT when purchased directly with HF Holidays Ltd.

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.

PRICE GUARANTEE

We promise that our earliest published prices will always be the best and if we reduce our holiday price after

your booking has been confirmed, we will pass this reduction on to you. Our price promise applies if any subsequent offer price is for an identical holiday, duration, location and date and does not cover any optional extras, flights or additional services.

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