

Orkney Guided Island Hopping Holiday

Tour Style: Island Hopping

Destinations: Scottish Islands & Scotland

Trip code: ZLLDW

Trip Walking Grade: 2



HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

Wide open spaces along with captivating scenery, heritage, and wildlife make Orkney a discovery worth making. Discover the islands of Mainland, Hoy, South Ronaldsay, Birsay, and Rousay on this seven-night guided walking holiday.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Full-board en-suite accommodation
- Experienced HF Holidays Leader
- All transport to and from the walks
- For 2022 – 'With flight' holidays include return group flight from London to Kirkwall
- For 2023 – 'With flight' holidays include return group flight from Glasgow to Kirkwall
- Group hotel transfer

HOLIDAYS HIGHLIGHTS

- Explore the Orcadian archipelago on coastal walks
- Discover some of the best prehistoric archaeological sites in Europe
- Take in Orkney's sea cliffs and sandy shores
- Chance to spot wildlife including seals basking on the shore
- Stay on the shores of Loch Harray



ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrival Day

Once you've landed, your transfer from the airport to the Merkister Hotel will be waiting to take you directly there. Alternatively, you're welcome to only join the transfer from the airport or make your own way to the hotel. Either way, we'll all meet at reception for 6:30pm when your HF Holidays Leader will introduce themselves and the next few days before dinner.

Day 2: Birsay, Marwick Bay & Maes Howe

Distance: 4 miles (7km)

Ascent: 510ft (160m)

Our first walk on the island of Orkney sees you following a heart-stirring cliff-top path from Marwick Bay to the Brough of Birsay, passing the Kitchener memorial overlooking RSPB Marwick Head reserve. If tide times allow, we'll head over to explore the tidal island, Brough of Birsay, and its remains of Pictish and Norse settlements.

If the causeway is covered, we've still got plenty of options. Watch out for wildlife along coastline or delve into the history of the island's fishing and whaling industries.

This afternoon we'll have time to visit one of the main draws – Maeshowe chambered cairn (entrance fee not included though Scottish/Welsh/English National Heritage members free). Take a peek at some of the images online, but they're nothing compared to the experience itself – it's a Neolithic masterpiece, completely unique

to Orkney.

Day 3: Hoy & The Old Man

Distance: 6 miles (9.5km)

Ascent: 700ft (210m)

One of the most beautiful and certainly the most rugged of the islands, Hoy, is much more 'Highland' or wildland, than the rolling countryside and crofts of the other islands. You'll set off on a classic must-see walk to the towering 449ft-high sea stack known as the 'Old Man of Hoy', returning to the idyllic setting of Rackwick Bay.

Day 4: Skara Brae, Yesnaby And The Ring Of Brodgar

Distance: 6 miles (10km)

Ascent: 500ft (150m)

You'll head on over to the west coast of Orkney today to discover one of its natural highlights, the sea cliffs at Yesnaby. From here you'll meander along the coast to the impressive Neolithic settlement at Skara Brae, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site (entrance fee not included though Scottish/Welsh/English National Heritage members free).

Once we've finished exploring, we'll discover another historical gem - the mystical Ring of Brodgar and the standing stones of Stenness. Make sure you've got plenty charge on your camera today – you'll not be short of spectacular scenery to capture.

Day 5: Kirkwall

Distance: 6 miles (10km)

Ascent: minimal

We'll make our way to the Orcadian capital, Kirkwall, where you've got plenty of options for how to spend the day.

Find out the stories and histories of the island on an illuminating guided walk of the town and nearby coastline. Or feel free to explore on your own – maybe hop on a ferry over to Shapinsay, visit the Orkney Museum and St Magnus Cathedral, visit a whisky distillery, or take time out and explore the craft and coffee shops.

Day 6: Scapa Flow, South Ronaldsay And The Italian Chapel

Distance: 4.5 miles (7km)

Ascent: 310ft (90m)

Our first stop will be the Italian Chapel on Lambholm island, an ornate Catholic chapel by Domenico Chiochetti. You'll discover the inspiration behind it, as well as how it was built by Italian prisoners of war, before setting off on a short coastal walk that's sure to blow the cobwebs away.

Gaze out over Scapa Flow and the islands of Flotta and Hoy in the distance as you make your way to the WWII batteries at Hoxa Head and the scenic Sands of Wright beach. Wildflowers, dolphins, and whales can often be seen here. And if the Tapestry Gallery is open, there's time to peek inside to view their handwoven creations. We'll continue to the Orkney Fossil and Heritage Centre on our way back to the hotel.

Day 7: Isle Of Rousay

Distance: 5 miles (8km)

Ascent: 510ft (160m)

Look out for red throated divers, guillemots, and more on the boat ride to the isle of Rousay. Nick-named the Egypt of the North, Rousay offers us a wealth of ancient archaeological sites to explore.

Our first port of call will be the Taversoe Tuick Neolithic burial cairn, then you've got the option of a self-guided visit to two other cairns on the southern flanks of the island.

If you fancy taking in the views from high above, join your guide on a walk to the highest point of the island, Blotchnie Fiold (4.75 miles/7.5km with 880ft/270m ascent).

Day 8: Departure Day

A group transfer takes us back to Kirkwall for your flight back to the mainland.

ACCOMMODATION

The Merkister Hotel, Orkney - Orkney

Situated on the shores of Harray Loch, The Merkister Hotel stands in its own grounds in the most wonderful location, commanding impressive views of this famous loch and its surroundings. All rooms have TV, direct-dial telephone, hairdryer, tea and coffee making facilities. Drying and laundry facilities are available and there is WiFi. Single rooms here are basic but comfortable.

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.

Food & Transport

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.

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 (With Flights)

This holiday begins in Orkney. For those who have booked our "with flight" option, you will fly from London to Glasgow/Aberdeen and take a connecting flight to Kirkwall airport (Orkney), from where you will be transferred to the Merkister Hotel.

Joining Instructions (Without Flights)

By Air

If you're travelling by air, you should book return flight to Kirkwall (Orkney). There are flights available from Glasgow, Edinburgh, Inverness, Aberdeen and Manchester. See Logan Air

By Ferry

Return ferry travel is available from Scrabster to Stromness or from Aberdeen to Kirkwall, and back from Lerwick to Aberdeen. Ferries are operated by North Link Ferries; www.northlinkferries.co.uk. The ferry terminal at Aberdeen is a 5 to 10 minute walk from Aberdeen railway station.

There are bus and train routes available to Scrabster from Inverness with City Link www.citylink.co.uk. There are also train services from Inverness to Scrabster with connections from Thurso, ran by Citylink & Rapson's Coaches.

If you are travelling independently, the group transfer from Kirkwall airport (Orkney) is included in your holiday price.

Please note that these transfers will be timed to connect with the HF Holidays' flights. We cannot make separate arrangements for guests arriving/departing at different times. For details of the HF Holidays' flights, please contact us on 020 8732 1250 or email reservations@hfholidays.co.uk. Please let us know your travel plans and expected time of arrival at least 8 weeks before your holiday. If we don't receive these details, we'll assume you'll be making your own way to the first hotel and we'll see you there.

If you are travelling by ferry and taking your own car, there is parking at the hotel. If travelling as a foot passenger, you will need to organise a taxi transfer to the hotel from the ferry terminal.

Essential Information

Essential Equipment

To enjoy walking/hiking comfortably and safely, footwear, clothing and equipment need 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 a hot drink
- Water bottle (at least 1 litre)
- 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 and a midge hood is highly recommended for Scotland
- 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

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.

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.

Small flying insects can be prevalent from late spring to late summer. There are various products on the market which can act as a barrier treatment.

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 – 5.30pm, 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 £30 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: National Westminster Bank, Account Name: HF Holidays Limited, Account Number: 48904805, Sort Code: 60-00-01, IBAN: GB90NWBK60000148904805

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

Your final balance payment is due 6 weeks before departure if you are staying in an HF Holidays UK country house, 8 weeks before departure if you are travelling on one of our holidays in Europe and 10 weeks before departure if you are on a Guided Trail staying in one of our partner hotels or are travelling on a Worldwide holiday. 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](tel:01702427236) 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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