

Orkney & Shetland Guided Island Hopping Holiday

Tour Style: Island Hopping

Destinations: Scottish Islands, United Kingdom & Scotland

Trip code: XGLDW

Trip Walking Grade: 3



HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

Pristine natural landscapes, peace and tranquility, wide open spaces and lung-fulls of fresh air. Orkney and Shetland will live up to all of this and more as you island hop from the quaint crofting communities of Orkney to the Scandinavian style fjords and voes of Shetland.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Full Board en-suite accommodation
- Experienced HF Holidays Walking Leader
- All transport to and from the walks
- Luggage transfer between accommodation
- Flight between Orkney and Shetland
- "With flight" holidays include flight from Aberdeen to Kirkwall, and from Sumburgh to Aberdeen and hotel transfers

HOLIDAYS HIGHLIGHTS

- Hop between Orkney & Shetland
- Experience pristine natural landscapes
- Spot wildlife on these relatively untouched islands

TRIP SUITABILITY

This Guided Island Hopping 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. It is your responsibility to ensure you have the relevant fitness and equipment required to join this holiday. Provision cannot be made for anyone who opts out. Please be sure you can manage the daily mileage and ascent detailed 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 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.

ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrival Day

Arrive on Orkney and meet at the Merkister Hotel.

Day 2: Brough Of Birsay And Ring Of Brodgar

Your first walk on the island of Orkney begins by following a superb cliff-top path from the island of Birsay, to the RSPB reserve of Marwick Bay and The Loons. In the late afternoon we explore the Ring of Brodgar, the standing stones of Stenness and the Neolithic chambered cairn of Maes Howe (Entrance fee not included Scottish / Welsh / English National Heritage members free).

9 miles (14km) with 760 feet (230m) of ascent.

Day 3: Skara Brae And Stromness

We begin with a visit to the impressive, ancient settlement of Skara Brae, now a UNESCO site of special heritage. (Entrance fee not included Scottish / Welsh / English National Heritage members free). Leaving this site mid-morning we then walk the coast south above the spectacular sea cliffs of Yesnaby to meet our transport on the outskirts of Stromness.

9½ miles (15.5 km) with 1,280 feet (380m) of ascent.

Day 4: Isle Of Hoy

Visiting the island of Hoy, we enjoy a magnificent walk which takes us out to the famous sea stack of the "Old Man of Hoy", before returning via the mysterious "Dwarfie Stone". Watch out for the "Bonxie" – the local name for the Great Skua. Spot them before they spot you, with one of their dives and if you are in luck you may spot a pair of Sea Eagles.

8½ miles (13.5km) with 850 feet (260m) of ascent.

Day 5: Shetland – Sumburgh Head And Jarlshof

Today we leave Orkney and head north to Shetland. On arrival, we visit Sumburgh Head RSPB reserve, the most southerly point of mainland Shetland. This elevated viewpoint affords extensive views over Shetland and of Fair Isle to the south. Our May & July departures will also witness an amazing sea bird spectacle as thousands of birds come ashore to nest on the cliffs. From here we descend to the inspirational archaeological site of Jarlshof ((Entrance fee not included Scottish / Welsh / English National Heritage members free) which covers a period of continuous habitation from 2500BC through to the 1600s.

2 miles (3km) with 200 feet (60m) of ascent. We then rejoin our transport for the scenic transfer to Busta House.

Day 6: The Eshaness Peninsula

This is our opportunity to learn a little about Shetland's heritage at the Tangwick Haa museum, as we circumnavigate the beautiful Eshaness peninsula. Today grants us a plethora of wildlife watching opportunities, as we wander past colonies of seabirds numbering in their thousands during the breeding season. We may also be lucky enough to spot seals today, both Common and Grey seals are often seen bobbing up and down in the bay.

9 miles (14km) with 1,060 feet (320m) of ascent.

Day 7: Muckle Roe

A rugged and remote walk to discover the red granite coastline of the Muckle Roe. This walk is a fitting finale from where we can look back and appreciate the beauty of yesterday's walk as well as today's, and admire the windswept isolation and beauty of Shetland.

7½ miles (12km) with 1,360 feet (420m) of ascent.

Day 8: Departure Day

Transfer to Sumburgh airport for your return flight to Aberdeen

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.

Orkney and Shetland have pristine natural landscapes; peace and tranquillity; wide open spaces and lots of fresh air - you will island hop from the quaint crofting communities of Orkney to the Scandinavian style fjords and voes of Shetland. Orkney is 10 miles north of the coast of Caithness and separated from Scotland by the Pentland Firth. Shetland is 50 miles north east of Orkney.

Orkney is the name given to a group of 70 islands, the largest being 'Mainland', home to the majority of the Orcadian population, and the centre for your stay on the island. Life on these islands is sustained by a mixture of farming, fishing and tourism. Islanders themselves highlight the contrast between the two archipelagos of Orkney and Shetland by describing each other as: "Farmers who fish" – the Orcadians and.... "Fishermen who farm" – the Shetlanders. This illustrates ideally the contrast between the locals themselves, and the landscapes in which they live. The natural landscapes here determine all life on the islands.

On Orkney you will have the opportunity to discover a treasure trove of history at the many heritage sites on

Mainland. Your walks take you to explore the standing stones of Stenness, the Ring of Brodgar, the UNESCO site of Skara Brae, and the exceptional Maes Howe.

From Orkney, your flight from Kirkwall will take you to **Shetland**, an island archipelago much more Nordic than Scottish. A barren but stunningly beautiful, ice-carved landscape, greets you, offering a plethora of wildlife watching opportunities. Your walks on Shetland traverse the windswept shores of the main island, from Sumburgh Head RSPB reserve in the south, to the brazenly beautiful peninsula of Eshaness and the ancient rocks of Muckle Roe.

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

This holiday begins in Orkney. For those who have booked our "with flight" option, you will take a mid afternoon flight from Aberdeen airport to Kirkwall airport (Orkney), from where you will usually meet your leader and will be transferred to the Merkister Hotel.

The flight between Orkney and Shetland on Day 5 is included in your holiday price and our Shetland coach company will pick you up at Sumburgh Airport.

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

Holiday Finish: Your holiday ends in Shetland. If you have booked our "with flight" option, we will take you back to Sumburgh airport, for your return flight to Aberdeen.

By Air

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

By Ferry

Ferry travel is available from Scrabster to Stromness *or* from Aberdeen to Kirkwall, and back from Shetland 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.

At least 8 weeks before your holiday start date, please contact us on 020 8732 1250 or email trails@hfholidays.co.uk with your travel plans and expected time of arrival.

What To Bring

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
- Walking/hiking boots providing ankle support and good grip are recommended (ideally worn in), and specialist walking socks to avoid blisters. Trekking/approach shoes are not recommended for this trek
- Sturdy sandals for any river and stream crossings. This is most relevant to the June departure
- 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
- 35-40 litre rucksack with a waterproof liner
- Water bottle (at least 1.5-2 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 and for crossing streams and snow patches
- Sun hat
- Sunglasses
- Sun cream
- Camera

Essential 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.

Suggested Reading and Maps

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

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orkney>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shetland>

Landranger 1: 50,000 Maps: 3, 4, 6 and 7

ATM Availability

Please be aware that apart from the ATMs at Kirkwall and Sumburgh airports, that charge a withdrawal fee, there are no ATM machines located anywhere on our itinerary. Both hotels accept payment by card.

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 & Sunday: 9am – 1pm Bank Holiday Monday: 9am – 1pm

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.

ASSOCIATE'S FEE

Non-members can join our holidays by paying an Associate's fee of £10 per person per holiday. Alternatively, full life 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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