

Explore for a day Outer Hebrides



Words will not do justice to the spectacular beauty, stunning wildlife and fascinating history of the Outer Hebrides.

Explore the land of the machair – the low-lying fertile plain that fringes the west of these islands and is maintained by traditional crofting practices – providing some of the world’s finest flower-rich meadows, busy with wading birds.

Cliffs covered in noisy seabirds, majestic eagles soaring high overhead and otters along the seaweed-fringed shore make your visit here special and memorable. Add to this mix, the vast peatlands of Lewis, the presence of the sea in all its moods, the rocky coasts, stunning beaches of white sand and scattered crofting settlements strung out through these islands and you have an unforgettable place.

Find out more about the mysterious monuments of first settlers and the traces of early Christianity in these isles. Encounter more modern stories of powerful clans, emigration, land struggles, the emergence of whaling, fishing and tweed industries and ships full of whisky running aground!

This leaflet gives you a flavour of the journey through the whole island chain from Barra to the Butt of Lewis and suggest places to visit along the way that will help you discover a little of what these islands at the very edge of Europe have to offer. Discover the Outer Hebrides by either following the suggested routes or simply create your own perfect day.

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1 Cille Bharra and Dun Scurrival Walk, Eoligarry

At the northern tip of Barra, between the gentle slopes Beinn Eoligarry and the turquoise blue sea, lies the crofting township of Eoligarry. From the jetty, walk straight up the road until you reach crossroads where you will find the fascinating remains of the 12th century Cille Bharra chapel. Compton MacKenzie, author of Whisky Galore, is buried in the churchyard here. Continue along the road heading north until it bends sharply at the shore, where you will see a stile. On the hill above, up a well-marked track, is the Iron Age hill fort of Dun Scurrival. Continue to the top of Beinn Eoligarry and return to the main road via the school or for a longer walk, head south along the spectacular beach before turning back across a track leading to the airport.

Grid reference: NF 713076



2 Traigh Mhor

This lovely beach at the north end of Barra is home to the world’s only commercial airport that has runways washed twice daily by the tide. Twin Otter aircraft connect Barra with Glasgow and Benbecula, using one of three runways marked in the hard sand of the beach. At high tide these runways are under water so flight times vary daily with the tide. Traigh Mhòr (in English ‘Big Beach’) is also popular with cockle pickers – the source of its other well known name: ‘The Cockle Strand’. Visitors and cockle pickers can tell if the airport is operating by checking to see if the windssock is flying. A café in the airport terminal offers a refueling stop on a tour of this end of the island.

Postcode: HS9 5YD
Tel. 01871 890212 www.hial.co.uk



3 Kisimul Castle

This spectacular 15th century stronghold, sited on a rock in Castle Bay, was the residence of the Chief of the Macneils of Barra. It takes the form of a three-storey tower house accompanied by a curtain wall shaped to fit the rock on which the castle stands. Heavy debts eventually forced the Macneil chiefs to sell Barra in 1838. However, a descendant, Robert Lister Macneil, the 45th Chief, repurchased the estate a hundred years later, and set about restoring his ancestral seat. A short boat trip from the pier takes you to this remarkable building where stunning views of the bay can be gained from high inside the curtain wall.

Admission charge (includes cost of boat trip)
Open April – September 9.30am – 5.30pm, weather permitting.
Postcode: HS9 5UZ
Tel. 01871 810313 www.historic-scotland.gov.uk

Facilities in Castlebay



4 ‘Annie Jane’ monument, Vatersay

The lovely island of Vatersay is nowadays the most southerly inhabited island in the Outer Hebrides and is connected to Barra by a causeway. It is famous for the Vatersay Raiders and their role in land reform in the early 20th century. A monument on West Beach commemorates the loss of the emigrant ship Annie Jane which foundered on rocks in 1853 with the loss of more than 350 lives. It is a pleasant short walk to the monument from a car park at the community centre. A nice extension to this walk is along the beach to the Iron Age broch at the far end.

Monument Grid reference: NL 630952



5 Mingulay

The fascinating island of Mingulay, sometimes called the ‘near St Kilda’, lies 12 miles south of Barra and can be reached by charter boat, providing the weather is suitable. A boat trip around the awe-inspiring western cliffs, virtually inaccessible and covered in sea birds, is an unforgettable experience. The island was abandoned by its residents in 1912 after more than two thousand years of human habitation. Iron Age sites and the ruins of the abandoned village of more modern times are testament to those who made a living from the land and the seas round Mingulay. Enthralling history, spectacular scenery and wildlife wait for those who make the trip to this special island.

Boat trips are available (weather dependent). Contact the Visitor Information Centre in Castlebay for more details.
www.nts.org.uk



6 Eriskay Walk

Eriskay is a beautiful island whose quiet roads and lovely beaches are perfect for a relaxing walk. This loop walk, of around 4 miles, leaves from the Sound of Barra ferry terminal. Cross the cattle grid and park in the small walled parking area on the left hand side of the road. Take the path to the sandy beach where Bonnie Prince Charlie first stepped ashore in Scotland. Walk along the beach and the dunes towards the village. Pass an old cemetery before arriving at ‘Am Politician’, a pub named after the SS Politician which sank off the coast of Eriskay, inspiring the famous film ‘Whisky Galore’. Follow the road round to the right as it climbs a small hill. At the top, turn right onto the road, which is signposted ‘Aiseag Caolas Bharraigh (Sound of Barra ferry)’. Walk down this road enjoying the spectacular views back to Barra. Follow the road round to the right as it returns to the ferry terminal and your starting point.

All facilities nearby

7 Kildonan Museum and Flora MacDonald’s birthplace at Milton

The museum is home to an extensive collection of South Uist artefacts, detailing life on the island in the recent past. An archive room is dedicated to the folklorist Margaret Fay Shaw, who spent many years collecting and preserving the music and song of South Uist. Find out more about the armorial Clanranald Stone, which is displayed here. The range of facilities at the museum includes a craft shop run by local craft producers, an excellent café and an archaeology room.

A few hundred metres south of the museum is the birthplace of Flora MacDonald, who famously assisted Bonnie Prince Charlie in avoiding capture by government forces after the battle of Culloden. It is marked by a plaque surrounded by stone walls.

Admission charge for museum Open April – September, 7 days a week. 10am – 5pm

Postcode: HS8 5RZ
Tel. 01878 710343 www.kildonanmuseum.co.uk



8 Howmore

The little township of Howmore - or Tobha Mòr - lies between the main road on South Uist and the beach which forms much of the island’s west side. Howmore is an attractive place and lies within a National Scenic Area. Situated between the mountains and the sea, it is home to one of Scotland’s best collections of thatched buildings. The village is also well-known for its remarkable collection of ruined medieval churches and chapels. Park at the modern church. A network of tracks lead from here to the white shell-sand beach and the dunes which run its length.

Postcode: HS8 5SH



9 Lionacleit Machair walk

A short walk on the machair with superb views over South Uist can be started at the Dark Island hotel. Go through the car park and turn right after the turbine and join a path that runs behind the sand dunes almost as far as the ruins of Borve castle. Return by the road to make a circular route. There are lovely views on the beach here too, if you prefer to go straight to the shore.

Postcode HS7 5PJ



10 Taigh Chearsabhagh

This thriving museum and arts centre is a place where people can meet, learn new skills and experience imaginative cultural interpretation. Located on the shoreline in Lochmaddy, Taigh Chearsabhagh offers vibrant and stimulating exhibitions and events throughout the year, inspired by the unique ecology, landscape and culture of the Uists. A café is located in the heart of the building and Taigh Chearsabhagh also houses a gallery shop and the local post office, as well as hosting a regular monthly music night, Taigh Ciuil.

Admission charge for museum exhibitions. Galleries admission free Cafe open Monday-Saturday, 10am – 3pm. Post office open Monday – Friday 10am – 4pm
Closed Christmas Day and New Years Day.

Postcode: HS6 5AD
Tel. 01870 603970 www.taigh-chearsabhagh.org



11 Barpa Langass and Pobull Fhinn (Fionn’s People)

This short circular walk of around 1.5 miles visits two prehistoric sites - the spectacular chambered cairn of Barpa Langass – the finest example in the Outer Hebrides and the only one with its chamber still roofed over - together with the only stone circle on North Uist. You can crawl inside the cairn through an entrance passage on the east side. From the cairn, the walk is marked by wooden posts and leads over the summit of Beinn Langass to the stone circle of Pobull Fhinn. At least two dozen stones make up this circle, which was probably named after the legendary Gaelic hero Fionn mac Cumhail.

Grid reference: NF 837657



12 Balranald RSPB nature reserve

Like much of the stunning west coast of Uist, this beautiful RSPB reserve has long sandy beaches and a rocky foreshore which are separated from the glorious flower-rich machair and marshes by sand dunes and shallow lochs. Corncrake and corn bunting may be heard as you walk across the croft land in the reserve. following a three mile trail that goes through the machair before following a dramatic coastline to a beautiful sandy bay. Wading birds and the elusive otter may be seen here. The information centre explains the importance of traditional crofting agriculture for the now rare corncrake and other wildlife.

Opening times Reserve - open at all times; visitor centre (unmanned) - April to August, 9 am to 6 pm. Guided walks available. Dogs must be kept on leads

Postcode: HS6 5DW
Tel. 01463 715000 www.rspb.org.uk



13 Isle of Berneray

Berneray encapsulates the fine coastal scenery of the Uists, with dunes and machair on its west side and rocky hillocks with an indented coast on its east. The famous west beach, which can be accessed from Borgh, is a three mile unspoilt, deserted crescent of sand with views over to the island of Pabbay. Berneray was also the birthplace of Angus MacAskill, said to be the world’s largest true giant. A range of facilities for visitors are mainly clustered around the harbour on the eastern side of the island. The Nurse’s Cottage contains information and displays on the history and natural history of the island.

Postcode: HS6 5BH www.isleofberneray.com



14 St Clements Church, Rodel

This beautiful building was built around 1520 for the Chief of the MacLeods of Harris, who lived across the Minch in Skye. It is also called Tur Chliamainn, which literally means ‘Clements Tower’ and is thought to be the grandest medieval building anywhere in the Outer Hebrides. The church’s atmospheric interior contains some fine examples of late medieval sculpture, including a magnificent wall tomb prepared in 1528 for Alasdair Crotach MacLeod, 8th Chief.

Open all year round – keys available from the hotel if locked.

Nearest postcode: HS5 3TW
Tel. 01851 710395 www.historic-scotland.gov.uk

15 Northton

Between the scenic village of Northton and the nearby headland are numerous sites of archaeological significance, including the ruins of a small medieval chapel. The MacGillivray Centre at the end of the village celebrates the work of the eminent Scottish naturalist William MacGillivray and provides information on the island’s natural heritage. Northton is also home to the Seallam genealogy visitor centre.

Postcode HS3 3JA



16 The MacLeod Stone

One of the nicest views in Harris can be found at the site of the MacLeod Stone. This very fine Neolithic standing stone, measuring more than 3 metres in height, is situated above a stunning beach at Nisabost. Parking is down a small track leading to the beach. Walk a short distance from there to the headland.

Grid reference: NG040971



17 Huisinis

On this spectacular road, you will pass the tall chimney at Bunaibhineader Whaling Station – the best-preserved example of a shore-based whaling station in the UK. The North Harris hills hold one of the highest densities of golden eagles in Europe and a new observatory in Glen Meavaig provides excellent views of the glen and ridges frequented by these birds. Park at Meavaig and walk approximately 1 mile along the track to the observatory. Return to your car and follow the road as winds its way along the loch, taking you right past the front door of the beautifully-located Amhuinnsuidhe Castle, before arriving at the stunning white beach at Huisinis. A cliff top walk heads north round the coast and offers breathtaking views over the island of Scarp.

Postcode: HS3 3AY www.north-harris.org



18 Eilean Glas Lighthouse, Scalpay

The peninsula of Eilean Glas is home to an historic lighthouse, one of the first four to be built in Scotland. The first lighthouse keeper arrived in the spring of 1789 and the lamp was first lit later that year. He was pensioned off 35 years later - weatherbeaten and stiff from long exposure on the Point of Glas. The original tower was replaced in 1824 and automated in 1978. The Northern Lighthouse Board own and operate the lighthouse here, although the rest of the site, including the original beacon, is in private ownership. In good weather, the walk to the lighthouse is very pleasant (allow 1.5 hours) and there are superb views out across the Minch to the Shiant. The walk across moorland starts from the ‘road end’ and is marked by long poles. Sturdy, waterproof footwear is recommended

Grid reference: NG 247948

19 Ravenspoint Centre, Kershader

The scenic district of South Lochs, sometimes known as the Pairc, has human history every bit as dramatic as its hills, lochs, moors and wildlife. The community-run Ravenspoint Centre is home to a museum and remarkable archives and exhibitions documenting the social history and culture of South Lochs. The Tweed industry, crofting, fishing and the land struggle in Pairc are all recorded here. The building also houses a café with loch side views and a community shop.

Shop and museum open 9am-6pm Mon-Sat, café open 10.30 – 4.30 Mon-Sat.

Postcode HS2 9QA
Tel. 01851 880236 www.ravenspoint.co.uk



20 Calanais Stones

Set within a landscape comprising of at least 20 ritual sites, the main monument at Calanais is spectacular. Built more than 4500 years ago, it is a cross-shaped setting of stones, centred on a circle of 13 tall stones. At its heart stands a solitary monolith 4.8 metres high. Lines of smaller stones radiate from the circle to east, west and south. A chambered tomb was placed within the circle some time later. It is thought that the alignments of the various stones were used to mark significant points in the cycle of the moon. A visit to this remarkable place is greatly enhanced by the Story of the Stones exhibition in the Visitor Centre.

Access to Stones all year. Visitor Centre open all year (Oct-Mar Wed-Sat only)

Postcode: HS2 9DY Tel: 01851 621 422
www.callanishvisitorcentre.co.uk / www.historic-scotland.gov.uk



21 Dun Carloway Broch

Dun Carloway is a remarkably well preserved Iron Age broch in a stunning location overlooking Loch Roag. The broch’s double wall is well preserved, standing as high as 9 metres in places and clearly showing how tiers of galleries were linked by a stone staircase within the hollow wall. An exhibition in the superb visitor centre, managed by the Standing Stones Trust (Urras nan Tursachan) gives a sense of what life in the broch might have been like and provides a fascinating insight into its history and significance.

Access to Broch all year, Visitor Centre Apr-Sep only

Postcode: HS2 9DY Tel: 01851 643338
www.callanishvisitorcentre.co.uk / www.historic-scotland.gov.uk



22 Gearrannan Blackhouse Village

Blackhouses were once common all over Lewis and a visit to the picturesque village of Gearrannan offers a glimpse of life in a crofting township in a bygone era. The houses at Gearrannan were inhabited until the 1970s and were by then becoming unique. They have been lovingly restored using traditional methods and along with the inclusion of modern facilities, create a unique place to visit and discover more about the history and heritage of the crofting way of life. Gearrannan is also the starting point for a cliff top walk to Dalbeg (around 5 miles return) which takes in a great beach at Dalmore.

Admission charge
Open Apr – Sep. Mon – Sat, 9.30am – 5.30pm

Postcode: HS2 9AL
Tel. 01851 643416 www.gearrannan.com



23 Dell – Ness coastal walk

Enjoy views of the Atlantic coast, taking in the most northerly point of Lewis, the Butt of Lewis lighthouse. The walk (around 5 miles return) starts at the Dell Community Hall. Walk north along the road and at the first junction turn left and follow the markers towards the shore and then follow the coast, passing the lovely dunes and beach by Eorpie before arriving at the lighthouse. From there either take the road south to Eorpie or follow the marker posts south east to Dun Eistean and Port of Ness. Return either by the coast, along the road, or by occasional bus. For a shorter walk (around 2.5 miles return) start and finish at Eorpie.

Postcode HS2 OSU

24 Garry Beach and the Bridge to Nowhere

The Bridge to Nowhere was built in 1920 by Lord Leverhulme, intended as the start of a route up the east coast of Lewis that never came to fruition. Park at the end of the road (B895) and walk on to reach the bridge. From there a mile or so of rough track leads round the cliff tops with spectacular views back to the Garry Beach and Traigh Mhor. Alternatively, just enjoy this lovely beach with its unusual rock formations and great views.

Grid reference NB 532499



25 St Kilda National Nature Reserve

The archipelago of St Kilda lies 41 miles west of Benbecula. With its dramatic landscape of sheer cliffs and sea stacks, St Kilda feels like a place perched on the edge of the world. It is one of only a few places with dual World Heritage Site status for both its natural and cultural significance. It is Europe’s most important seabird breeding area and includes the world’s largest northern gannet colony. Two early breeds of sheep have survived on these remote islands, the Soay and the Boreray. Both were important sources of meat and wool to the human inhabitants of these isles whose diet otherwise was heavily based around seabirds and their eggs, gathered at great risk from the high cliffs. St Kilda was finally abandoned in the 1930’s bringing to an end an extraordinary two thousand year story of human survival.

Boat trips (full day) are available from Leverburgh in Harris and Uig in Lewis (weather dependent)

Grid reference: NF 103991
Tel. 01870 604628
www.kilda.org.uk
or www.nnr-scotland.org.uk



Other visitor information

There are many other sites to discover in the surrounding area. Find out more at www.visitscotland.com or at Visitor Information Centres in:

Stornoway	(all year round)	01851 703098
Tarbert	(Apr – Dec)	01859 502011
Lochmaddy	(Apr – Oct)	01876 500321
Lochboisdale	(Apr – Oct)	01878 700286
Castlebay	(Apr – Dec)	01871 810336

The Outer Hebrides are a paradise for outdoor enthusiasts. Kayaking, sailing, rock climbing, fishing and diving can all be organised locally. Excellent local produce, including fish and seafood and the famous Stornoway black pudding can be found all over the Outer Hebrides. Look for outlets as you travel through the islands.

Road signs in the Outer Hebrides are generally either bi-lingual or in Gaelic only. Please be aware that the place you are looking for may not be spelt exactly as you expect.

There is a tradition of Sabbath observance in North Uist, Harris and Lewis. Many attractions, restaurants and cafés may be closed on a Sunday. It is worth checking in advance.

Services and facilities

The main towns and villages of Castlebay, Lochboisdale, Balivanich, Lochmaddy, Tarbert and Stornoway all have facilities for visitors, including shops, toilets and places to find a meal or a snack. Many smaller villages are also home to cafes, restaurants and interesting shops.

Information on bus, air and ferry services to and within the islands can be found on www.travelinscotland.com. Ferry information is also available from www.calmac.co.uk

National Nature Reserves are magical places where you can experience the incredible sights and sounds of Scotland’s natural world. Located throughout Scotland, National Nature Reserves are open to everyone to visit and enjoy. Find out more at www.nnr-scotland.gov.uk.

Scottish Natural Heritage is the government agency looking after all of Scotland’s nature and landscapes, across all of Scotland, for everyone. Find out more at www.snh.org.uk.

Know the code before you go...
Enjoy Scotland’s outdoors responsibly! Find out more at www.outdooraccess-scotland.com.

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ITINERARIES

Discover the area by following the suggested itineraries. You are never far from nature in these rugged, but beautiful islands so sturdy footwear and a waterproof layer are recommended.

Itinerary 1

Barra and Vatersay – Southern belles

The islands of Barra and Vatersay between them boast more than ten miles of sandy beaches, including the famous beach which serves as Barra's airport. With quiet roads, great walks and abundant wildlife, these islands are a paradise for outdoor enthusiasts.

This itinerary will take you to the beautiful northern tip of Barra where a lovely walk starts from Eoligarry jetty (allow a couple of hours) to the stronghold of the Clan Macneil at Kisimul castle, prominent in Castlebay. An evening walk in Vatersay takes you to the poignant memorial to those lost in the shipwreck of the emigrant ship 'Annie Jane' in 1853.

The main road in Barra (the A888) is circular and can be joined at any point. This itinerary will take you round both parts of this route, assuming that the starting point is the pier in Castlebay.

Eoligarry

From the pier head in Castlebay, turn right onto the main road and drive out of the village, along the island's east coast. After 6 miles, at Northbay, turn right onto road signposted for the airport, the Sound of Barra ferry and 'Eoligeairraidh' (Eoligarry). Follow this road for 3.5 miles, passing the airport, until you see a road leading off to your right, signposted 'Caladh Eoligeairraidh'. Stay on this road, as it bends round to the right. Park at the jetty, where the walk begins.

Kisimul Castle (HS)

From Eoligarry, return the way you came until you reach the junction with the main road (A888), at Northbay. For an alternative view of the island, turn right here, to return to Castlebay by the west coast. If you have time and fancy including a scenic viewpoint, take a small road on your right 1.9 miles after Northbay. It is signposted 'Grinn & Cleit, Barra Golf Course'. Take the first left, following the signs for the golf course. Near the end of the road, before a cattle grid, you will see a track on the left, leading up the hill to a radio mast. From the top of this hill, there are fantastic views down the west coast. Back at the A888, continue round the island, until you reach Castlebay. The boat for Kisimul leaves from the harbour. Castlebay boasts a very interesting Heritage Centre where you can find out more about the history of Barra and Vatersay. The Heritage Centre, Dualchas is a short walk from the pier, heading west. Refreshments are available in the Heritage café there.

Vatersay

To reach Vatersay, leave Castlebay on A888, heading west. In just over 0.5 miles you will see a road on your left, signposted 'Nasg, Bhatarsaigh, (Vatersay)'. Turn onto this road, which will lead you to the causeway connecting the Barra and Vatersay. On arriving in Vatersay, follow the road straight on and stay left at the junction with the bus stop. After 2.5 miles you will see a community centre / hall. Park in a small grass car park immediately after this building.

Itinerary 2

Eriskay and South Uist – the land of the bent grass

Continue your journey north through the island chain with this itinerary, which starts on the lovely island of Eriskay. A short walk gives you a chance to appreciate the pace of life and tranquility of this island before you move on to the spectacular island of South Uist, much of which is a National Scenic Area. Set between the mountains and the sea, in the traditionally-managed crofting landscape, the Kildonan Museum offers a glimpse of island life through the ages. The Clanranald Stone, displayed in the museum, connects you to the last site on this itinerary – the medieval ecclesiastical settlement at Howmore where the stone sat for centuries.

Eriskay Walk

This walk starts from and returns to the ferry terminal. Once you have enjoyed a leisurely walk in Eriskay, return to your car. At the top of the road, turn left onto the main road, back in the direction of the village. At the junction, follow the road round to the right, then take the second road on the left, signposted 'Uibhist a Deas (South Uist)'. This road will take you over the causeway to South Uist.

Kildonan Museum and Flora MacDonald's birthplace at Milton

Arriving in South Uist, follow the road as it bends around to the left. In 2.5 miles you arrive at a crossroads. Turn right onto the B888, in the direction of 'Dalabrog, (Daliburgh)'. At Daliburgh, turn left onto the A865, in the direction of 'Loch nam Madadh (Lochmaddy)'. Kildonan Museum is 4 miles from this junction, on the right hand side of the road. The road sign for this attraction says 'Tigh Tasgaidh Uibhist a Deas (South Uist Museum)'

Howmore

Head west on the A834 and at Contin turn left onto the A835. Continue north on the A865 for 6 miles. Turn left onto the road signposted 'Tobha Mor (Howmore)'. The chapel site is at the end of the road. Park by the modern church.

Itinerary 3

North Uist – Tir an Eorna (the land of the barley)

North Uist is a magical place – the rocky and indented east coast meets the stunning flower and wildlife-rich grasslands of the machair and the beautiful beaches of the Atlantic coast across sweeping moorlands – a lacework of water and land.

This itinerary takes you from the village of Lochmaddy, the principal port and home to the excellent Taigh Chearsabhagh Museum and Arts Centre, across the moorland to a spectacular chambered cairn and stone circle on Beinn Langass, before finishing with a visit to the RSPB Reserve on crofting land at Balranald. Stroll through the beautiful machair landscape, look for the rare corn bunting and listen for the rasping cry of the corncrake.

Taigh Chearsabhagh

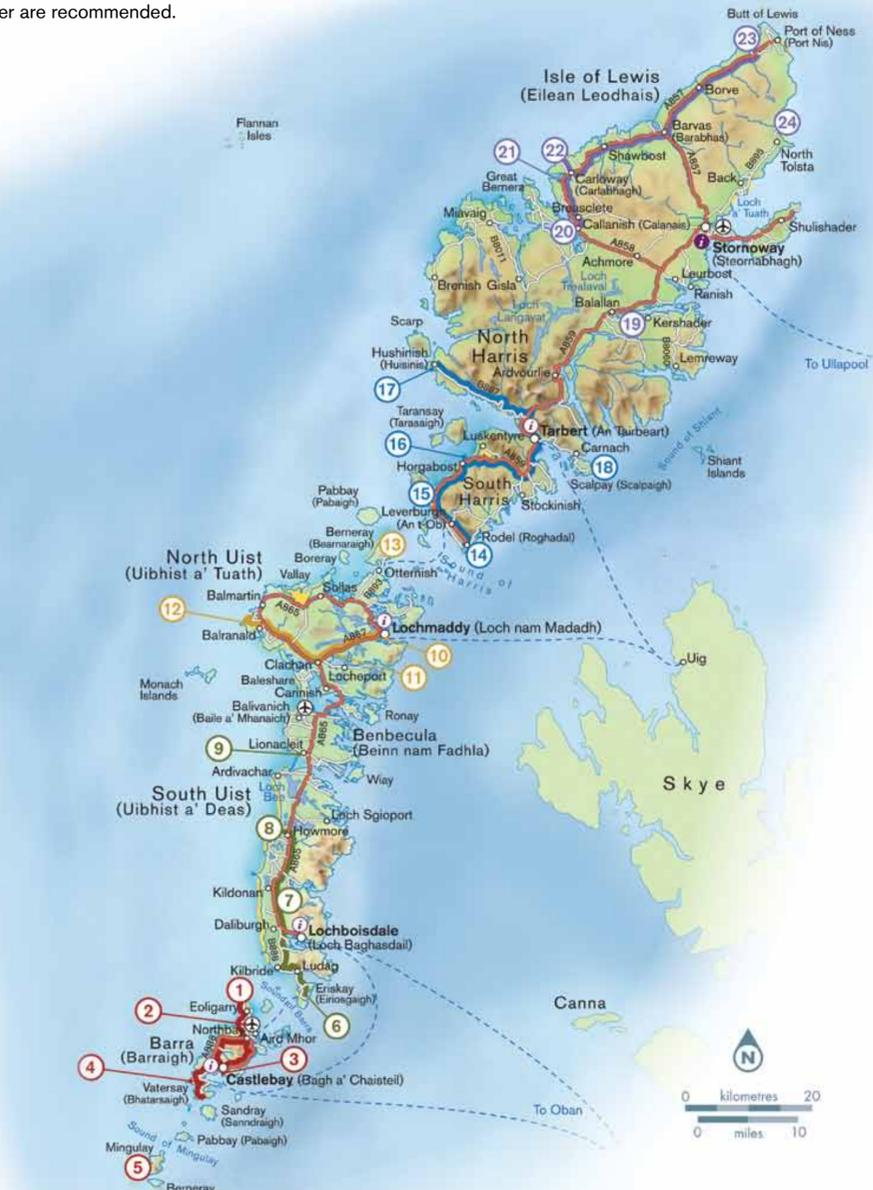
Taigh Chearsabhagh is on the shore in the middle of Lochmaddy and is well sign-posted

Barpa Langass

Leave Lochmaddy on the main road (the A867), following the signs for Clachan. After 5.5 miles you will see a signposted car park for Barpa Langass on your left hand side. The cairn can be clearly seen on the hillside. Begin by following the surfaced path, soon passing through an iron sculptured-gate. The path forks just before the cairn but both branches lead around it in a loop. Follow the path onwards to the stone circle, from where the path returns by the Langass Lodge hotel. From here follow the minor road back to the A867. Turn right and walk along the verge to return to the Barpa Langass car park.

Balranald

From the Langass car park, continue west on the A867 heading for the small settlement of Clachan, where you will come to a crossroads. Turn right here, following the A865 in the direction of Sollas. Remain on this road, which will take you through scattered crofting settlements along the stunning sandy Atlantic coast. In just over 7 miles you will see a brown sign on your left hand side pointing you towards 'Raon Gleidhteachas Bhaile Raghnaill (Balranald Nature Reserve RSPB)'. Turn left onto this road and follow it until it splits near the township of Hogha Gearraidh. Take the left fork, signposted prosaically for 'Toilets'. This will take you to the car park and whitewashed visitor centre.



Itinerary 4

Harris – where eagles dare

Harris is a place of contrasts. Wild rugged mountains lie to the north and on the rocky east coast remnants of lazy beds – ridges for growing crops – are still visible on the hillsides among scattered settlements. The wonderful beaches and fertile lands of the west coast, which were once cleared of people to make way for large farms, form a soft fringe for this beautiful coastline. Home to both golden eagles and sea eagles, and part of a National Scenic Area, Harris is a wonderful place to explore.

This itinerary starts at the south eastern tip of the island, with the fine church in Rodel and takes in a stunning variety of Harris scenery, ending at Huisinis, where a lovely cliff top walk awaits.

St Clements Church, Rodel

Leave the pier in Leverburgh, heading north. At the top of Pier Rd you come to a crossroads. Turn right onto the A859, signposted for 'Roghadal' (Rodel). Continue down this road for 2.5 miles. You will see St Clements Church on the right hand side. Refreshments are available at the hotel, further down the road, by the pier.

Huisinis

Return from Rodel towards Leverburgh. Continue on the A895 through Leverburgh and up the stunning west coast of Harris. This coast is famous for breathtaking scenery and beautiful beaches. Continue to follow the A895 as it passes through Tarbert. The village has a range of visitor services. 3 miles north of Tarbert, turn left onto the B887, signposted 'Huisinis'. Enjoy the drive to Huisinis, which is right at the end of the road.

Itinerary 5

Lewis – settlers ancient and modern

Lewis is the largest of the islands of the Outer Hebrides and home to Stornoway, the principal town. The vibrant capital is an interesting place, with modern facilities, an excellent museum and the lovely woodlands of Lews Castle, once owned by Lord Leverhulme, who, during his brief ownership made a mark on these islands. Traces of other settlers are everywhere in Lewis too, from ancient sites and towers, through to Norse place names, the Lewis chessmen and medieval Christian sites. Crofting settlements are evidence of turbulent times and land struggles of the 19th century while loom sheds scattered throughout the island show the importance of Harris Tweed to the local economy. This itinerary takes you on a brief journey through this history in the wide open landscapes of Lewis. Discover the breathtaking monuments of early settlers at Calanais, step a century back in time to appreciate life in the crofting township of Gearrannan, then go on foot to the most northerly point in Lewis.

Calanais

From Harris, drive north on the A859 until you reach Leurbost (28 miles north of Tarbert) where you turn left, following road signs for 'Gearraidh na h-Aibhne'. A brown tourist sign points to 'Ionad Tursachan Calanais (Callanish Stones Visitor Centre)'. After 9 miles, a sign points you left to the standing stones and the visitor centre. Follow this road around 0.5 miles. Shortly after it reaches the shore you will see the visitor centre and car park on your right.

Gearrannan Blackhouse

Leaving Calanais, continue northwest on the A858 for 6.5 miles until you reach the village of Carloway. When the road bends sharply turn left, following the signs for Gearrannan. The village is at the end of the road.

Dell – Ness coastal walk

Return to the A858 and continue north. At Barvas, turn left onto the A857, signposted for 'Port Nis'. Drive for 12 miles on this road. Just after you pass Dail bho Dheas (South Dell), you cross a stream and the community hall is prominent on your right hand side. Park here, or continue north following signs for 'Eoropaigh' (Eoropie) if the shorter walk appeals to you.

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