



get **Active**
in **Orkney**



Live it. Visit *Orkney*.
visitorkney.com 0845 22 55 121

If you are an outdoor enthusiast, why not take a trip to the spectacular

Orkney Islands

An archipelago made up of 70 or so islands and skerries, full of activities ideal for an action-packed holiday. Orkney offers a rich variety of outdoor pursuits and between the sea, land, lochs, hills and beaches, there's not much our islands cannot offer someone looking for a day of action – not forgetting the stunning surroundings to take in at the same time.

You are never too far from the coast to enjoy water sports such as **surfing, sailing, windsurfing, kitesurfing, diving** and **kayaking**, while inland you can play a round of **golf** or try a spot of **fishing** on one of Orkney's lochs or even explore the islands on **foot** or by **bike**.

Whatever your pleasure, if you have visited Orkney before, we hope you'll be back with us again soon, and if not – read on, we're sure you'll like what you find.

2nd edition

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For further information on Orkney please request a copy of the main holiday guide online at:

www.visitororkney.com

or call **0845 22 55 121**

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Sunset on the cliffs at Yesnaby.

Front Cover Photo: Spectacular old red sandstone cliffs on the west side of the island of Hoy.



Walking



The Castle of Yesnaby.

Walking is one of the best ways to experience Orkney, by combining the pleasures of the senses, and an intimacy with the environment which many visitors find so fulfilling. Whether you enjoy walking as a break from sightseeing or like to make it the main focus of your holiday, you'll find plenty of choice in Orkney.

Throughout the islands there are walks that will be challenging and strenuous or easy-going – whatever the individual is interested in. There are various areas for walkers to enjoy; coastal routes, hill and moorland areas and woodland.

Coastline

Orkney has 500 miles of coastline with spectacular scenery to take in along the way. There are also excellent opportunities to see large seabird colonies as the islands attract over a million breeding seabirds, gathering in great 'cities' on the cliffs, from May to mid-July. Out to sea; look for dolphins, porpoises and whales which pass this way especially in early autumn.

Natural erosion features can also be found along the coast, with caves, arches and sea stacks adding to the experience. There are areas steeped in geology, look out for fossil fish beds and horse tooth stromatolites. You can also explore miles of safe, sandy, clean, accessible beaches and bays.



For walking routes & downloadable maps visit:
www.visitororkney.com/walking

The cliffs on the west side of Hoy are some of the highest in the UK and are truly spectacular.

Hill & Moorland

The island of Hoy has been described by many as "a world of its own," because of its rich moorland, and colourful heathery hills. A trip to this unique spot in Orkney will provide keen walkers with a wealth of breathtaking scenery to view, and numerous wildlife-spotting opportunities.

At Mull Head on Orkney's East Mainland, there is the opportunity to take in coastal grassland, heather moorland and spectacular cliffs. Circular walks ranging from 4-8 miles are provided by paths through the reserve. Walkers will pass the Gloop – a stunning, partly collapsed sea cave.

The walk can be extended to allow a visit to the Covenanters' Memorial, dedicated to the memory of 200 Covenanters who lost their lives in a shipwreck here in 1697.

On Orkney's West Mainland, the RSPB nature reserve, the Birsay Moors, is home to some fantastic wildlife, including hen harriers, throated divers, and on the ground, Orkney voles.



Woodland

One of Orkney's most beautiful woodland walks can be found just outside the small village of Finstown. Binscarth Wood is a unique seven and a half acre woodland spot, offering the walker an easy journey by track. For those who prefer a little more adventure, a route can be made through the woods, although this is a more challenging walk which can be wet underfoot.

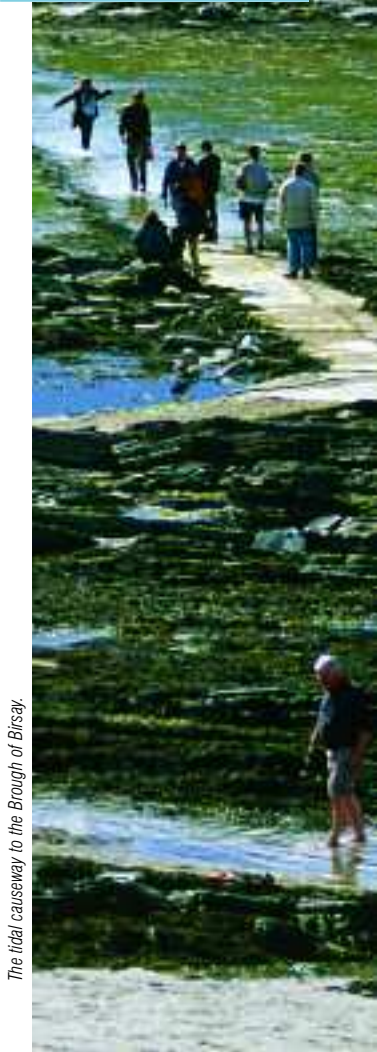
The woods were planted last century with a variety of trees including sycamore, ash, beech and hawthorn. Following the track over the hill, Wasdale Loch comes into view. From above the loch, the walker can marvel at excellent views of Orkney's farming heartland. Wasdale Loch is home to several wetland birds, such as mallard and teal.

Wilderness Scotland

3A St Vincent St, Edinburgh, EH3 6SW
t: (0131) 6256635
e: info@wildernessscotland.com
w: www.wildernessscotland.com



Explore the natural beauty of the Orkney Isles on a walking holiday which includes a hike to the Old Man of Hoy, superb coastal and island walks, and visits to some of Orkney's best historic sites.



The tidal causeway to the Brough of Birsay.

Diving



Diving in Orkney is one of the world's great underwater experiences. Anyone who has had the thrill of descending amongst the sunken vessels of an entire German fleet in Scapa Flow will tell you of the eerie serenity of the wrecks, the clarity of the water, and the easy familiarity of the wildlife.

Sheltered Waters

Scapa Flow is 24km by 13km and lies, lagoon-like, within the surrounding islands of Mainland, Graemsay, Burray, South Ronaldsay and Hoy. The sheltered nature of 'the Flow' means bad weather rarely disrupts planned diving schedules.

It is world-renowned for its strategic importance in two World Wars, as a safe harbour to the British fleet, and as the last resting place of many courageous mariners.



On 21 June, 1919, the high seas German Fleet was ordered to scuttle and 74 ships were sent to the bottom of Scapa Flow. The fleet consisted of ten battleships, six battle cruisers, eight light cruisers and 50 destroyers. Many of the ships were salvaged but eight German wrecks still remain, preserved as a haven for diving exploration.

With its peaceful azure waters concealing centuries of maritime history, a plethora of wildlife and marine fauna, Scapa Flow is

one of the top wreck diving sites in the world and diving its depths is both alluring and addictive.

Exploring the remains of the German High Seas Fleet, scuttled in Scapa Flow.



Other Sites

As well as the German fleet wrecks there's much more on offer from previously salvaged ships, blockships, scenic drifts and of course the waters are teeming with marine life, from colourful sea urchins to playful inquisitive seals.

The visibility experienced in Orkney waters is usually 10 metres but can be as good as 15-20metres.

Remains of 'blockships' at the Churchill Barriers.



Some of the wrecks found in Orkney waters

- 1 Bellavista
- 2 Tomalina
- 3 Tosto
- 4 Llama
- 5 Char
- 6 HMS Hampshire
- 7 Kingston Turquoise
- 8 Freesia
- 9 St Rognvald
- 10 Hastings County
- 11 Endeavour
- 12 Zarefah
- 13 Manina
- 14 Loch Maddy
- 15 Cotovia
- 16 Tabarka
- 17 Doyle
- 18 Gobernador Bories
- 19 Tennessee
- 20 Karlsruhe
- 21 Markgraf
- 22 Kronprinz Wilhelm
- 23 Brummer
- 24 Koln
- 25 Aorangi
- 26 Konig
- 27 Dresden
- 28 Remus
- 29 V 83
- 30 F2 & Barge
- 31 UB 116
- 32 Daghesten
- 33 S 54
- 34 James Barrie
- 35 Giralda

Divers of all abilities will find businesses in Orkney which will assist with tuition, equipment, boat hire, and the essential local knowledge. See a list of contacts in the back of this booklet.

Cycling



Orkney is a fantastic destination for cyclists, with its gentle rolling landscape and sweeping panoramic scenery around every bend in the road.

The easy-going pace of life in Orkney allows cyclists to relax and take time to enjoy the sites all around; history, wildlife and spectacular natural features.

Being mainly rural, Orkney offers pleasant moderate cycling on quiet roads and on the smaller outer islands the journey is even more peaceful.

Mainland Orkney

Cycling on Mainland Orkney is a pleasure as the fairly flat landscape makes for easy headway. There are many quiet country roads to explore, with interesting stops along the way and with circular routes in abundance, especially on the West Mainland. Routes can be planned to suit your own requirements.

Orkney's World Heritage status, 'Neolithic Heartland' centred in Stenness and Sandwick on the West Mainland, was recently described as "one of Scotland's Seven Wonders", and it is easy to see why, when you first discover the ancient village of Skara Brae, set against the beautiful backdrop of Skaill Beach. Great stone circles and mysterious burial tombs older than the pyramids and dating from 5,500 BC can be found throughout the islands.

The East Mainland of Orkney offers more recent artefacts in the form of the Churchill Barriers, built during World War II to protect the great natural harbour of Scapa Flow. These barriers now link the South Isles to Mainland Orkney, making it easy to explore these southern reaches.

Orkney's quiet roads are ideal for keen cyclists.

The Isles

Ferries to the North Isles are frequent and offer a great day out for cyclists, as most of the islands are fairly flat. Rousay is perhaps the exception to this rule but has some exceptionally well-preserved archeological remains.

The south island of Hoy is unlike most of Orkney in that the north of the island is largely untouched by farming and is very hilly. Well worth a visit though as the roads are quiet and the scenery is some of the most spectacular in Orkney. Rackwick is a must-see, but bring a packed lunch as services are limited. Ferries run to Hoy, Graemsay and Flotta from Stromness and Houton.



Equipment

You can bring your own bike, although bikes and cycling equipment can be hired from local outlets.

Hired bikes should be booked in advance if cycling is an essential part of your visit.

Orkney Cycle Hire Cycle Hire

54 Dundas Street, Stromness
t/f: (01856) 850255
e: orkney.cycle.hire@talk21.com

ORKNEY CYCLE HIRE

Best prices in Orkney. Open 7 days.
Free Helmets. SPECIAL RATES for weekly hire. SPECIAL RATES for Families or Groups. Child seats/ Children's Bikes. Child buggy or Towing Cycle available.
Delivery can be arranged.

A number of accommodation providers are members of the



VisitScotland 'Cyclists Welcome' scheme. They provide additional services to cyclists such as lockable covered sheds for bikes, clothes drying facilities etc. Look out for these providers in the VisitOrkney brochure or on-line at: www.visitorkney.com



From Stenness with Graemsay and Hoy in the background.

Fishing



Casting a line on Harray Loch.

Loch Fishing

Orkney's brown trout fishing is some of the finest in Britain with lochs which are easy to access and offer varied conditions.

Loch fishing is free and no permit is required to fish on the majority of Orkney lochs. However, if you wish to use the Orkney Trout Fishing Association (OTFA) facilities, launch a boat, or access the Loch of Skail, you will need to contact the association.

OTFA is a non-profit-making body dedicated to the enhancement of game fishing throughout the islands. Visiting fishermen can support and show their appreciation of facilities by taking out a subscription to the association.

OTFA also produce a comprehensive guide to the main trout lochs, facilities and techniques. For further details go to:

www.orkneytroutfishing.co.uk

The main lochs on Mainland Orkney are Harray, Boardhouse, Hundland, Swannay, Stenness, Skail and Kirbister. In the smaller isles, OTFA has worked on restocking since the 1980s, on lochs such as Bea, North and Roos on Sanday, Swartmill on Westray, and Meikle Water on Stronsay. It's well worth a short ferry ride to experience these lochs.



Wild brown trout from Harray Loch.

**The brown trout season runs from:
15th March to 6th October.**

**The sea trout season runs from:
26th February to 31st October.**

The Lochs

Swannay * – The most northerly Mainland loch. Situated in Birsay, it is slightly peat stained. It is good for larger fish but can have periods of little activity. Best months are May and June.

Boardhouse & Hundland * – Also situated in Birsay, Boardhouse is a brown peat stained loch, giving good shore fishing, particularly earlier in the year, and excellent boat fishing all season long, due to the lack of skerries. Trout are around 11 to 14 oz and daphnia is the major food source. Hundland lies close by and feeds Boardhouse.

Harray * – This is the most famous loch, and is the largest on the Mainland, extending to 2,500 acres. The 14 miles of coastline make it the best for shore fishing, but as the season progresses and the fish move deeper, it is best to use a boat. Brown trout between 10oz and 2lbs are often caught. Conditions can change quickly and you need to vary your fly according to the most prolific food item.

Stenness * – This loch is best for shore fishing and most locals tend to fish when the water is low. It has sea trout as well as brown trout.

Kirbister – This loch is recommended for beginners because of the large numbers of trout and their responsiveness in any conditions.

Skail – Close to Skara Brae, this loch is exclusively for OTFA anglers. It holds some of the largest trout to be found on the Mainland.

* Boat hire is available - ghillies can be arranged through the Merkister Hotel.

Sea and Shore Angling

The waters around Orkney are warmed by the North Atlantic Drift, and provide ideal sport for the keen fisherman, whether in the shadow of The Old Man of Hoy, or around the sheltered marks in Scapa Flow. If it's big game you're after, huge common skate hunt the depths of the Flow and porbeagle shark patrol the Pentland Firth most of the year - peaking from January to April.

Local boats and fishing tackle are available to hire, subject to weather conditions and availability.

With over 500 miles of coastline, Orkney offers a wide variety of shore fishing venues from exposed storm beaches on the west coast to sheltered water beach and rock marks on the east coast or in Scapa Flow. Many popular fishing spots are only a stone's throw from the road, so, with such a huge choice of location, there is always somewhere to cast a line, no matter the weather.

Local knowledge is essential to making a real success of your sea angling in Orkney and useful info can be had by visiting the websites: www.seaanglingorkney.com or www.anglingorkney.co.uk, the website of Orkney Islands Sea Angling Association for further details and competition schedules.

Please take care when fishing from rock marks in Orkney as the swell and tides can be unpredictable.



Many species can be found in Orkney waters.



Sailing



Sailing regatta in Westray.

The waters around the Orkney Isles have been attracting yachtsmen and women from as far afield as Norway and Brittany for many years, drawn by the spectacular coastline, the many sheltered anchorages, and the traditional hospitality in Orkney's delightful harbours.

Orkney is ideally placed as a central base for cruising both the East and West Coast of Scotland, and linking to Shetland and Norway. Also the new marinas in Kirkwall, Stromness and Westray provide berthing and comfortable facilities for visiting boats and locals alike, all of which place Orkney high on the Scottish coastal cruising agenda.

Around the smaller isles, tiny harbours with friendly hotels, suppliers and essential services abound. Every island is different, with a fascinating history and many ancient stones and sites.

Sailing in Orkney is sailing in its purest form, with dramatic scenery, a wealth of wildlife and challenging conditions, which are all excellent reasons to make Orkney your next sailing adventure!

Events

If you're interested in competing in local races, there are various events throughout the sailing calendar when all visiting boats and crews are welcome.

In July each year, the popular Orkney Challenge Yacht Race from Lossiemouth to Kirkwall takes place, which brings a friendly throng to the harbours. Old friends meet up and newcomers become old friends.



Sailing in Kirkwall Bay.

Make Orkney a part of your cruising itinerary this year . . . and every year

Annual Sailing Regattas

Stromness Regatta – June
Finstown Regatta – June
Rousay Regatta – June
Longhope Regatta – July
Holm Regatta – July
Stromness Regatta – July
Westray Regatta – July
Kirkwall Regatta – August
Round Shapinsay – August
Holm Regatta – August
Round Gairsay – August
Kemp Cup – September

Find yourself anchoring in Orkney soon. Whenever you come, the welcome will be warm. For further information on sailing in Orkney, rates, and to check out competition dates log on to the Orkney Marinas website at: www.orkneymarinas.com or email info@orkneymarinas.co.uk

Marina Facilities

Kirkwall Marina - VHF 12

Piermaster: 01856 872292

Marina: 07810 465835

Lat N58 d 59.3' Long W02d 57.45'

A 95-berth marina within the harbour and just yards from the attractions of this ancient port. Accessible at all states of tide, all-year facility, excellent shelter. Showers available at Kirkwall Sailing Club. All other facilities can be found close to the harbour.

Stromness Marina - VHF 12

Piermaster: 01856 850744

Marina: 07810 465825

Lat N58 d 57.4' Long W03d 17.5'

A 64-berth marina within the harbour and just yards from this historic town. Accessible at all states of tide, all-year facility, excellent shelter. Showers, toilets and laundry on site. All other facilities can be found close to the harbour.

Westray Marina - VHF 12

Piermaster: 01857 677216

Marina: 07810 465784

Lat N59 d 19.4' Long W2d 58.5'

Serviced visitor pontoon facility within Pierowall Harbour. Accessible at all states of tide, summer facility, excellent shelter. Showers and toilets on site.



Climbing



The Old Man of Hoy with St John's Head in the background.

Rock climbing in Orkney is not for the faint-hearted or inexperienced climber. Routes consist mainly of coastal sandstone rock and cliff routes, on crumbling or weed-covered stone. Mainly known to climbers for its majestic sea stacks, Orkney is in fact virgin territory for rock climbing, providing great potential for new routes.

Coastal climbs will also allow you the opportunity to experience Orkney's nature close up. With millions of breeding seabirds in the summer months you're sure to see the piratical great skua, gannets, razorbills, guillemots and, if you're lucky, the colourful puffin.



Hoy – (High in Old Norse)

The south island of Hoy has some of the most spectacular and challenging sea cliffs in the UK and without doubt, The Old Man of Hoy is Orkney's most famous climbing challenge, attracting only the boldest climbers to tackle its intimidating 137m.

The stack's climbing history has been well documented in numerous publications and television "spectaculars," from the first ascent by Messrs Baillie, Bonnington and Patey to the more recent climb in 2006 by Sir Ranulph Fiennes.

Whilst the magnificent structure, which stands on a lava flow, is probably the biggest attraction to Orkney for climbers, the area can provide many other challenging climbs.

St John's Head to the north of the 'Old Man' is the highest vertical sea cliff in the UK and standing at 351m would be an extreme challenge for any climber. Indeed all along the west side of Hoy the cliffs are spectacular and virtually virgin territory for climbers. In the late summer evenings the setting sun turns the cliffs a rich fiery red.

Although the 'Old Man' is the best known stack in Orkney there are various other climbing challenges on offer throughout the islands. Actually getting to your desired climb can be a serious challenge in itself. The swell and tides around Orkney shores can be fierce and unpredictable. For local information or a description of selected routes visit:

www.orkney-seastacks.co.uk

Yesnaby Castle is found just south of the Brough of Bigging at Yesnaby, on the west coast of the Orkney Mainland. The first ascent up this 115ft sea-stack was made by a Mr Joe Brown and some friends in 1967. It has regularly received visiting climbers ever since.

North Gaulton is found on the west coast and the stack is very much the big brother of Yesnaby Castle, as they are both set in an amphitheatre of cliffs which guard against any approach, the only difference being that North Gaulton is almost twice the size as Yesnaby Castle.

The Needle, a stack on the south-west coast of Hoy offers a real challenge. Climbers must find their way through the only known route, beginning on the landward corner on the south face. A perilous journey to a monstrous pitch at the last hurdle will take you to the summit.

On the east tip of the island of Stronsay you will find **The Brough**, which is a huge, flat-topped stack. There are three pitches, taking the climber up a distance of 80m in total, and descent is by a 30m abseil. The neighbouring island of Westray is also worth a visit where you can find **The Castle of Burrian** on the outskirts of Rackwick Bay.

Lastly, it is imperative that the appropriate safety procedures and precautions are followed while rock climbing in Orkney, due to the nature of the rock.



The rugged Orkney coastline offers many challenges for climbers.



Puffin.



Gannet.

Kayaking



Exploring the spectacular and varied coastline of the north isles.

Whether it be tackling the swirling and chaotic tidal streams within the Pentland Firth or gently gliding through glass-like waters beneath a sheltered cliff-line, the experiences and memories of paddling in Orkney will ensure you find an excuse to return time and time again.

The 70-plus islands and remote skerries which make up the archipelago of the Orkney Islands are recognised by many as a sea kayaker's paradise. With clear blue waters, golden sandy beaches, cliffs and deep caves they offer a variety of journeys and adventures for the beginner through to the advanced paddler.

Variety

There are a number of easier paddling options for those new to kayaking or wanting a more relaxing adventure. These include the sheltered shorelines close to the Churchill Barriers, around Scapa Flow or within the many deep bays and inlets which have access to the shore.

For the more adventurous paddler wishing to tackle the white water and faster-moving currents, there are wild and remote coastlines with open water crossings to far-flung and unspoilt islands like Aukerry, Swona, Papa Westray and North Ronaldsay.

Common Seals



Harbour porpoise.



The Vat of Kirbuster on Stronsay.

The beauty of paddling amongst the many islands and spending time on the ocean is that you can do things at your own pace. The choice is yours, whether it be an overnight camp on a remote beach, a chat with a friendly islander, a close-up encounter with an otter or just choosing to head for the watery horizon to search out the peace and tranquillity of being in one of the most beautiful and atmospheric sea kayaking locations in the world.

The Wild West

The exposed and stunning cliff-lined coastline along the north and west of Orkney provides an excellent playground for those wishing to feel the power of the ocean swell and tackle the waves that have travelled thousands of miles from the mid Atlantic.

Gaining access to the base of steep cliffs teeming with seabirds, or the remote off-shore skerries gives the paddler the opportunity to explore sections of coastline which are relatively inaccessible to others. This unique and exciting method of travel lets the paddler experience being 'up close and personal' with a wide range of wildlife including a myriad of seabirds, sleeping seals and even pods of porpoise or killer whales if you're lucky!

Sea caves, archways and geos around round Orkney's coastline.



It is imperative that wherever you choose to explore, you should check an up-to-date local weather forecast and tide tables to ensure the weather and water conditions are within your ability. Having a good knowledge of tidal movements that may affect your journey and prior experience of being in choppy or unpredictable seas will enhance your enjoyment of seeking out the many adventures on offer around the unspoilt and rugged coastlines.



Riding the Atlantic swell.

Golf



Kirkwall golf course.

Whether your handicap is five or 35, Orkney's golf courses will test your golfing ability, and if the golf is not up to scratch, then the views and hospitality definitely will be!

There are three main golf courses on the Mainland; Stromness, Kirkwall and South Ronaldsay, all offering a mix of links, parkland, ditches, quarries and even wartime bunkers. The courses in both Kirkwall and Stromness are 18 holes and the course in South Ronaldsay is a challenging nine holes.

The courses are charming and cheerful places to play and socialise, with a turn-up-and-play policy (exceptions to this are competition times and special event days). However, at all courses, visitors are welcome to enter the Open events held throughout the season.



Stromness golf course offers spectacular views.

Kirkwall

The Orkney Golf Club is situated on the outskirts of the main town of Kirkwall. The elevated position of the course gives great views over Kirkwall harbour and the North Isles. The course was opened in 1902 as a nine hole course and then gained another nine in 1923. Kirkwall now operates as a Par 70 with a standard scratch of 67. Being situated on the top of a hill the wind can add to the challenge of the course!

Stromness

If you're looking for a course with stunning scenery, the Stromness course has unrivalled views over Graemsay, Hoy Sound and the 1,000ft cliffs of 'The Kame' on Hoy.

The course operates as a Par 65 with a standard scratch of 63. Precise iron play is a must if you are to build a good score here. Don't be fooled by the length of this course as it is a stern test but a real joy to play. Once you have finished admiring the scenery the clubhouse and bar await you at the 19th hole.

South Ronaldsay

In the south of Mainland Orkney, across the Churchill Barriers you will find the newly built South Ronaldsay golf course. A testing nine hole course, situated on the outskirts of the picturesque village of St Margaret's Hope.

The course opened in 2005 and was built by the local people of South Ronaldsay. Cleverly positioned ditches and undulating fairways make this a tricky wee number! The town of St Margaret's Hope is well worth a walk through, with gift shops and craft producers. The Old Smiddy blacksmith's museum is open to visitors during the summer.

Stromness Golf Club

Ness Road, Stromness
t: (01856) 850772
e: enquiries@stromnessgc.co.uk
www.stromnessgc.co.uk



Scenic 18 hole course. Green fees £20 per day. Visitors welcome. See website for Open competitions.

The North Isles

If you're looking to play a round with a difference, why not try the 'golfing-for-fun' experience, by playing a round on three of our North Isles: Westray, Sanday and North Ronaldsay boast nine hole courses. Best described as 'rustic', these 'wild' courses offer an un-fussy but challenging game.

In Westray, enjoy the views from the seaside links course. In Sanday, try the fun-sized links offering golfers the chance to play in one of the most scenic and secluded spots in Orkney. While in North Ronaldsay you'll be playing on a links course which is further north than the southern tip of Norway!

Why not join in with the long-established tradition of midnight golf at the summer solstice, when the sun barely sets.

It's fair to describe these events as more of a social occasion than a serious golfing event, but what better excuse do you need than to join in on this unusual activity?



North Isles courses can be challenging.

Surfing



The Bu Sands in Burray.

Orkney's fantastic surfing potential has been a well-kept secret by many boarders, keen to keep it to themselves.



Thankfully, the secret is out, and it is official – Orkney can offer surfers some of the best waves in Europe. Board, wind and kite surfers can all enjoy the fantastic sporting conditions that Orkney has to offer.

Kitesurfing

Large uncrowded beaches, clear waters, and some of the best surf conditions in Europe make Orkney a 'must-do' destination on a kite surfer's map.

This daredevil sport, combining windsurfing, wakeboarding, surfing and paragliding involves using a large re-launchable kite to power you on the water. Keen kitesurfers can be spotted on local beaches in the right conditions.

Those who go kitesurfing in Orkney will be rewarded with fantastic memories of their adventures on unspoilt beaches, in an area that provides perfect conditions for the sport.



Kitesurfing at Scapa Beach.

Board Surfing

There is a small but very keen group of local surfers in Orkney, and it is well worth bringing your board when you visit. Skail Beach in Orkney's West Mainland is definitely a surfing hotspot, boasting some of the biggest waves in Orkney. This coastline is exposed to the Atlantic Ocean and waves generated in north Atlantic storms power ashore at Skail.

Many who have braved the water there say it has been their most memorable surfing experience, and more and more boarders are being tempted to try it.

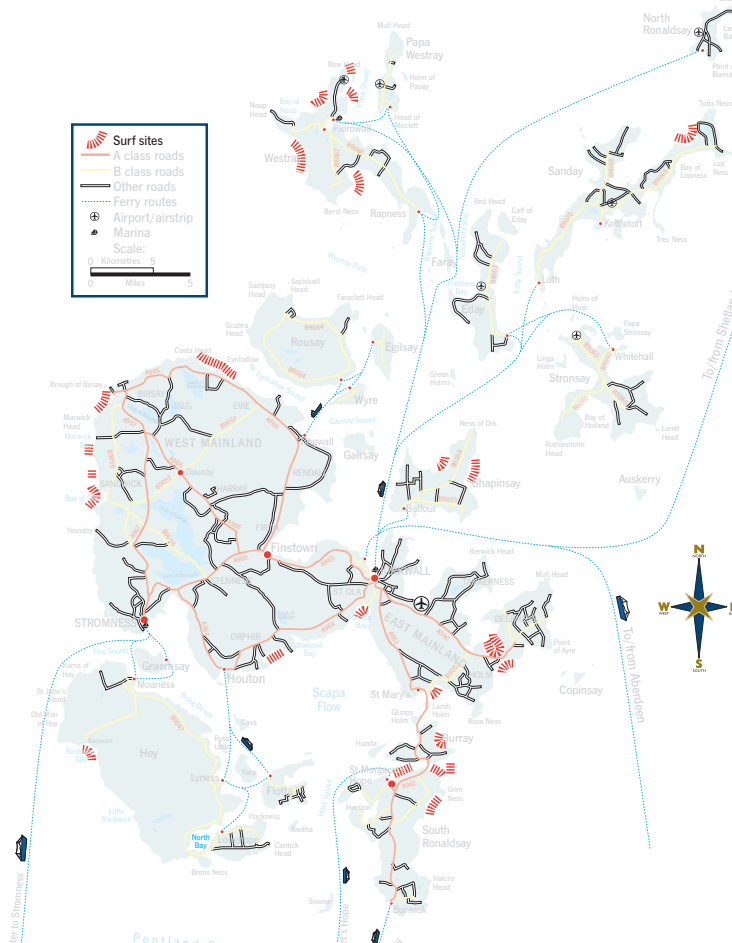
Windsurfing

Orkney's high average wind speeds make it perfect for windsurfing - a sport which has been popular in the islands for years. Long sweeping beaches, and exposure to the North Sea and Atlantic make it an adventure playground for windsurfers.

Local enthusiasts can be found windsurfing at Kirkwall's Scapa Beach, or Orphir's Waulkmill Bay, the moment conditions turn in their favour. On the west coast of Mainland Orkney, the storm beach of Skail Bay, in Sandwick, is also a favourite windsurfing spot.



Safety is imperative whichever form of surfing you pursue. Always check the local weather forecasts and tide tables to ensure the conditions are safe. **In the winter, swells can reach up to 20-30ft, and surfers are advised that they should be experienced before tackling these waters.**





Multisport

Competitors race for the water at Scapa Beach.

Orkney has a surprisingly active multisport scene. The combination of welcoming active local clubs, quiet roads and excellent outdoor scenery adds up to making a busy active multisport calendar. Orkney has a thriving athletics, triathlon and cycling clubs diary of events with opportunities for all abilities to enjoy - whether that be training or participating in local events.

Middle Distance Triathlon

In September, 2006, in almost perfect weather conditions, Orkney played host to its first-ever Middle Distance (open water) Triathlon, which now looks set to be an annual event.

The half iron distance is a Scottish ranked (open water) event and is one of only two such events in Scotland. This "middle distance" triathlon is certainly a unique experience, taking competitors around Orkney's Mainland, passing through Orkney's strong farming parishes.

The swim, which is 1.9km, starts at Scapa Beach near the main town of Kirkwall and is a two loop triangular course. As the water temperature would be expected to be between 14 and 16°C, wetsuits are mandatory and neoprene caps are heartily recommended.



Cycling past the Standing Stones of Stenness.

The cycle route is a circular 100km course over Orkney's West Mainland. The route is hilly and undulating. The roads are open but are well marshalled and signed. During the cycle you will pass through the heart of Neolithic Orkney taking in the spectacular sights of Maeshowe, the Standing Stones of Stenness and the Ring of Brodgar.

Lastly, the 20km run which starts at the Pickaquooy Centre in Kirkwall is a four-loop course out and around Scapa Beach.

The Triathlon Club, keen to see this event as a 'must do' on the Scottish athletics calendar, is actively encouraging team entries, so go ahead and get together with some fellow sporting enthusiasts and head to Orkney to join in!

Whatever your interest, whether it be half marathons, 5 or 10k races, cross county running events, cycling (training and time trials), triathlons (long and short distance) or duathlons, you can find further information and event dates by visiting the Orkney Triathlon Club website:
www.orkneytriathlon.co.uk

Hoy Half Marathon

Scotland's most scenic and friendly half-marathon takes place on the island of Hoy every June. Various age categories, including veterans, take part and there are children's events for those aged 5-17. Transport is provided from Orkney Mainland.



The Hoy Half Marathon.

Fitness & Leisure



The Pickaquooy Centre.

Keeping fit and healthy in Orkney is an easy task, with so many fantastic facilities at hand. In 1999, an all-purpose, state-of-the-art leisure centre was built in Kirkwall, and it has become the hub of the area's thriving fitness and leisure scene.

Facilities

The Pickaquooy Centre offers sports, arts and entertainment in a friendly, warm environment. With camping and a play area on site, it is the perfect place to start your holiday. It also houses the New Phoenix Cinema, which regularly screens the latest blockbusters, but if it's keeping fit that you're into, look no further than the Fitness Zone. This fantastic gym area provides keep-fit fans with the use of up-to-date equipment, helping you to stay in shape.

Those who prefer group fitness can work with trained instructors in regular classes, including international favourites, Bodypump and Bodybalance. Classes are available to people of all levels of fitness, helping to keep you up to date with your fitness regime.

Active sports such as tennis and badminton can be played at the Pickaquooy Centre, and tennis courts are also available for hire at Stromness Academy. Stromness is also home to fully equipped squash courts, which are available for hire.

The fitness suite offers a good range of gym equipment.



Swimming

If you feel like a swim during your visit, on the Mainland there is a choice of the 25m Kirkwall Swimming Pool, or the 25m Stromness Swimming Pool, which also has a gym. In the smaller isles, pools can be found on Hoy, Stronsay, Westray and Sanday. There are also fitness suites provided at the Healthy Living Centres on Shapinsay, St Margaret's Hope, Westray and Sanday.

In Orkney's West Mainland, visitors will be welcome to attend the Dounby Centre, comprising a sports hall, fitness room and function room.

The Pickaquooy Centre Leisure Centre

Muddisdale Road, Kirkwall
t: (01856) 879900
f: (01856) 879901
e: enquiries@pickaquooy.com
www.pickaquooy.co.uk



Orkney's premier leisure facility for the whole family. Facilities include: fitness suite, health suite, cinema, soft play area, sport arena, athletic track & group fitness programme.

If you feel like relaxing after a hard day of sight-seeing, why not call in to the Health Zone for a jacuzzi, steam room or sauna session. Qualified beauticians, masseurs and aromatherapists are on hand to offer you the latest beauty and complementary treatments, such as reiki, reflexology and physiotherapy.

The centre also boasts a new luxurious cafe/bar, serving up a fantastic selection of delicious meals, snacks, and drinks.

Children will have hours of fun in Smuggler's Cove – an adventure playground made up of rope nets, slides and a ball pool, but watch out for the pirates!



A wide variety of activities are on offer at the Pickaquooy Centre.

Other Activities



Orkney has a strong rugby team and compete in the National Division 5 Caledonia A League.

Kite Flying

Orkney is known for its wind, which is a necessary element for flying a kite! There are many excellent flat sandy beaches ideal for you to have fun flying a kite or head to Bignold Park in Kirkwall.

Motocross

Motocross is very popular and there are several competitive events held by the local clubs throughout the year – the season runs October to March. The most popular race is the 'Orkney Beach Race' which takes place on the Bu Sands in Burray.



The Orkney Motocross Club track at Hill of Heddle, Finstown.

Rugby

Orkney's Rugby Club play against a number of teams including Shetland RFC, RAF Lossiemouth RFC, Aberdeenshire RFC, Alloa RFC and Fife Southern RFC, to name but a few. In addition, each year Orkney hosts a Sevens tournament and a number of visiting teams take part. For details about the club and if you would like further details on the Sevens tournament, go to www.orkneyrfc.co.uk

Skatepark

A new skatepark opened beside the Peerie Sea in Kirkwall in the summer of 2005. Funds were raised for the park by a team of local children, the Orkney Skatepark Group, to provide a safe activity zone for roller blading, BMX cycling and skateboarding enthusiasts.



Beaches

Orkney has some of the country's most isolated, peaceful, beautiful and clean beaches. With 500 miles of coast to discover, from exposed storm beaches to sheltered shallow bays, there is a beach to suit everyone. The tidal rise and fall in Orkney waters makes for a diverse and abundant ecosystem and supports a huge variety of life in the tidal areas, attracting many varieties of feeding birds.

Rockpools are a great source of entertainment for young and old alike and searching for that elusive 'groatie buckie' can become something of an obsession.

Roving Eye Boat Tour Operator

Westrow Lodge, Orphir
t: (01856) 811309
e: k2bichan@aol.com
www.rovingeye.co.uk



A unique opportunity to see the under-water wrecks of the German Fleet in Scapa Flow with the aid of an R.O.V. with underwater camera. Sealife, birds and seals are also seen. VisitScotland 3 Star visitor attraction.

Boat Tours

If you're interested in exploring Orkney by sea but don't sail yourself, there are opportunities to go on day trips to get close to Orkney's marine wildlife and some of the UK's largest seabird colonies. Charter boats tend to be flexible and can tailor the trip to accommodate your requirements. You can discover the coast on an exhilarating wildlife cruise or a speedboat.

For anyone interested in the sunken German fleet in Scapa Flow, but who is unable to dive, there is the opportunity to discover some of the wrecks without even getting your feet wet! An underwater remotely operated vehicle explores the wrecks while you watch its on-board camera from the comfort of the boat.

Paintball

Take your chances on the field of combat with a game of Paintball. Orkaan Adventures in Burray offer paintballing and laser combat sessions with all equipment supplied for a great day out. Clay pigeon shooting also on site.

Bowling (outdoor greens)

There are three outdoor bowling greens. These are open during the summer only and can be found in Kirkwall, Stromness and St Margaret's Hope.



The Stromness Bowling Green.





The County Agricultural Show, held annually in Kirkwall in August.

Horse Riding

Horse riding is a great way to explore Orkney and the excellent facilities of the indoor arena at the Market Stance on the outskirts of Kirkwall make riding in all weathers possible.

The arena itself is 53 metres by 36 metres with a sand surface, which is groomed regularly, rides really well. There are also several bridleways and many rights of way open to access by riders.

Gaira Driving Ponies Carriage Driving

Gaira, South Ronaldsay, Orkney
t: (01856) 831523
e: gairadriveponies@btinternet.com
www.gairadrivingponies.co.uk



Carriage driving tours round South Ronaldsay. Lessons and fun children's sessions. All ages catered for.

If you would like to go trekking when you're in Orkney, whether you are a beginner or an experienced rider, or if you would like to groom a pony on a farm and have a shot on a horse drawn wagonette, there are local stables which can provide these services.

Also during August there are various agricultural shows held throughout the islands, where horses are exhibited and compete in various show-jumping events.

Outdoor Centres

The council run two outdoor centres located on Hoy and in Birsay, which offer residential courses tailored to the needs of local schools and other organisations. Activities on offer include canoeing, sea kayaking, climbing, abseiling, walking, orienteering, campcraft skills, environmental studies, kite flying, archery and scuba diving. Activities encouraging teamwork are also available for children of many age groups and abilities.

You will find that there is something to do around every corner in Orkney, and you may find yourself spoilt for choice! See page 3 for contact details.



The Old Man of Hoy.

Directory

Boat Tours

Explorer Fast Sea Charters

5 Harbour Terminal, Kirkwall Pier, Orkney
t. (01856) 871225
e. expcharters@aol.com
w. www.explorercharters.co.uk

Roving Eye Boat Tours

Westrow Lodge, Orphir, Orkney
t. (01856) 811309
e. k2bichan@aol.com
w. www.rovingeye.co.uk

Bowling (Outdoor)

Stromness Outdoor Bowls

Mr D. Brown, Parklane House, Stromness, Orkney
t: (01856) 850661

Kirkwall Outdoor Bowling Club

c/o Mrs K. Hutchison,
t: (01856) 761550

St Margarets Hope Outdoor Bowls

t. (01856) 831440
e. bowling@orkneycommunities.co.uk

Climbing

Orkney Climbing Club

t. (01856) 721353
w. www.workneyclimbingclub.co.uk
or the definitive guide at:
www.orkney-seastacks.co.uk

Cricket

Sanday Cricket Club

t. (01857) 600341
e. nearhouse@zetnet.co.uk

Cycle Hire

Orkney Cycle Hire

54 Dundas Street, Stromness, Orkney
t/f. (01856) 850255
e. orkney.cycle.hire@talk21.com

Scottish Cycling Holidays

87 Perth Street, Perth
t. (01250) 876100
e. info@scotcycle.co.uk
w. www.scotcycle.co.uk

Cycle Orkney

Tankerness Lane, Kirkwall, Orkney
t. (01856) 875777
e. peediealex@aol.com

Mountain Bike Hire

Greenhill, Whaness, North Hoy, Orkney
t. (01856) 791225

Stromness Cycle Hire

Ferry Road, Stromness, Orkney
t. (01856) 850750



Rockpooling at the Brough of Birsay.

Diving

Halton Charters

3 Ness Rd, Stromness, Orkney, KW16 3DL
t. (01856) 851532
e. bob@mvhalton.co.uk
w. www.haltoncharters.co.uk

Scapa Scuba Dive Centre

Lifeboat House, Stromness, Orkney
t/f. (01856) 851218
e. diving@scapascuba.co.uk
w. www.scapascuba.co.uk

Scapa Flow Diving Centre

t. (01856) 751492
e. kenny.peace@scapaflowdivingcentre.com
w. www.scapaflowdivingcentre.com

Orkney Dive Boat Operators Association

Emily Turton 110 Victoria St, Stromness, Orkney, KW16 3BU
t. (01856) 850292
e. divescapa@rqcharters.co.uk
w. www.odboa.co.uk

Sunrise Charters

Carradale, Weyland Bay, Kirkwall, Orkney
t. (01856) 874425
e. dougie@sunrisecharters.co.uk
w. www.sunrisecharters.co.uk

Scapa Flow Charters

5 Church Road, Stromness, Orkney
t. (01856) 850879
w. www.jeanelaine.co.uk

The Diving Cellar

4 Victoria Street, Stromness, Orkney
t. (01856) 850055
f. (01856) 850395
e. leigh@divescapaflow.co.uk
w. www.divescapaflow.co.uk

Scapa Flow Diving Holidays

Lerquoy, Outertown, Stromness, Orkney
t. (01856) 851110
e. info@scapa-flow.co.uk
w. www.scapa-flow.co.uk

Fishing

Orkney Trout Fishing Association

c/o Caolilla, Finstown, Orkney
t. (01856) 761586
e. editorial@orkneytroutfishing.co.uk
w. www.orkneytroutfishing.co.uk

Orkney Islands Sea Angling Association

Howequoy, Holm, Orkney
t. (01856) 781215
e. info@anglingorkney.co.uk
w. www.anglingorkney.co.uk

Groat's Charters

Housebay Cottage, Shapinsay, Orkney
t. (01856) 711254
e. groats@orkneyangling.co.uk
w. www.orkneyangling.co.uk

Merkister Hotel

Harray, Orkney
t. (01856) 771366
e. merkister-hotel@ecosse.net
w. www.merkister.com

Barony Hotel

Birsay, Orkney
t. (01856) 721327
e. info@baronyhotel.com
w. www.baronyhotel.com

Fitness & Leisure

Pickaquoy Centre

Muddisdale Road, Kirkwall, Orkney
t. (01856) 879900
e. enquiries@pickaquoy.co.uk
w. www.pickaquoy.co.uk

Orkney Swimming Pools

Kirkwall (01856) 872364
North Walls (01856) 701460
Sanday (01857) 600310
Stromness (01856) 850552
Westray (01857) 677430

Golf

Orkney Golf Club

Grainbank, Kirkwall, Orkney
t. (01856) 872457
e. orkneygolfclub@grainbank.freemove.co.uk
w. www.orkneygolfclub.co.uk

Stromness Golf Club

Ness Road, Stromness, Orkney
t. (01856) 850772
w. www.stromnessgc.co.uk
e. enquiries@stromnessgc.co.uk

South Ronaldsay Golf Club

t. (01856) 831395
e. neviholm@gmail.com
w. www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/SRGC

Westray Golf Club

t. (01857) 677303

Sanday Golf Course

t. (01857) 600341
e. nearhouse@zetnet.co.uk

North Ronaldsay Course

(01857) 633242

Horse Riding

Gaira Driving Ponies

Gaira, South Ronaldsay, Orkney
t. (01856) 831523
e. gairadriveponies@btinternet.com
w. www.gairadrivingponies.co.uk

Horse & Country

Junction Road, Kirkwall, Orkney
t. (01856) 870160 or 870150
e. shop@horseandcountry.co.uk

Cruan Riding School

Grimbister, Kirkwall, Orkney
t. (01856) 761271 or 07951814671
w. www.cruanridingschool.co.uk

Orkney Riding Centre

Dennis Bichan
t. (01856) 872542
w. orkneycommunities.co.uk/orkneyridingcentre

Orkney Carriage Driving Group

t. (01856) 741248
e. hrossey@fsmail.com
w. www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/carriagedriving

Kayaking

Kirkwall Kayak Club

t. (01856) 872922 or 771386
w. www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/kirkwallkayakclub

Orkney Sea Kayaking Association

e. chair@oska.org.uk
w. www.oska.org.uk

Model Yachts

Model Yacht Club

t. (01856) 873836 or 874774

Motocross

Orkney Motocross Club

w. orkneycommunities.co.uk/motocross
e. secretary@orkneymotocross.co.uk

Outdoor Centres

The Hoy Centre

c/o Orkney Islands Council, Kirkwall, Orkney
t. (01856) 873535 ext 2147
e. community.recreation@orkney.gov.uk

The Birsay Outdoor Centre

c/o Orkney Islands Council, Kirkwall, Orkney
t. (01856) 873535 ext 2147
e. community.recreation@orkney.gov.uk

Rackwick Outdoor Centre

c/o Orkney Islands Council, Kirkwall, Orkney
t. (01856) 873535 ext 2147
e. community.recreation@orkney.gov.uk

Walking

The Orkney Ramblers' Club

t. (01856) 761085
e. info@doughoughton.com
w: www.orkneypics.com/ramblers

Rugby

Orkney Rugby Football Club

Pickaquoy, Kirkwall, Orkney
t. (01856) 872163
e. mike.girvan@btinternet.com
w. www.orkneyrffc.co.uk

Sailing

Orkney Marinas Ltd

Grasethowe, St.Ola, Kirkwall, Orkney, KW15 1SE
t. (01856) 871313
e. info@orkneymarinas.co.uk
w. www.orkneymarinas.co.uk

Orkney Sailing Club

The Girnol, Harbour Street, Kirkwall, Orkney
t. (01856) 872331
w. www.orkneysailingclub.org.uk
e. crirvine@orkneysailingclub.co.uk

Sail Orkney

20 George Street, Kirkwall, Orkney
t. (01856) 878216
w. www.sailorkney.co.uk
e. brian@sailorkney.co.uk



Paddling at Dingieshowe beach in Deerness.

For further information on Orkney go to: www.visitorkney.com

Kirkwall Visitor Information Centre

The Travel Centre, West Castle Street, Kirkwall, Orkney, KW15 1GU
t. (01856) 872856
e. info@visitorkney.com

Stromness Visitor Information Centre

Stromness Travel Centre, Pier Head, Stromness, Orkney, KW16 1BH
t. (01856) 850716
e. stromness@visitorkney.com



Wild Brown Trout caught on Harra Loch.



Live it. Visit Orkney.
visitorkney.com 0845 22 55 121