



Eilean Glas Lighthouse, Scalpay © Robert Bridge

Stac a'Phris, Lewis © Mairi Thomson

Eoligarry Beach, Barra © Steve Gormley

Reulval Bènbèula, Lewis © James Smith

Space to warm your soul
visitouterhebrides.co.uk



Wellbeing Trail

Space to Warm your Soul

Welcome to the Outer Hebrides, a captivating chain of islands in the Atlantic Ocean with the ideal natural environment to help boost your physical and mental wellbeing.

As soon as your feet touch our Hebridean soil, you'll feel your shoulders relax and your mind open as you harmonise with the inspiring landscape of mountains, moors, machair and white sandy beaches, places that host the very best of Gaelic culture, history, wildlife, arts and food and drink.

Here, you'll find the space to switch off, restore a sense of calm and free your mind to enjoy the simple things in life once more.

This trail features 41 places across the 130-mile long archipelago from the Isle of Mingulay in the south to Ness at the northern tip of Lewis. You can explore the trail by car, bike or by public transport and on foot.

To make sure we give you the space you need, we've mostly included quieter, lesser-known places recommended by locals so you can uncover the many hidden gems that await in the Outer Hebrides.

Let our islands give you the space to warm your soul.

Thank you to the islanders who have kindly provided their recommendations on places to boost your wellbeing: James Anderson, Chris Loye, Kate MacDonald, Sarah Maclean, Kathryn MacLeod, Norma MacLeod, Eileen Murray, Lindsay Robertson, Julie Sloan, Mairi Thomson, Mairi Voinot and Catriona Walker.



Please help us to keep our islands special. Follow the pride of P.L.A.C.E visitor code to holiday in harmony with our unique environment and our local communities.

The information provided on this leaflet is believed to be correct at the time of publication. To ensure latest details, please check before travelling: visitouterhebrides.co.uk



Reef Beach, Lewis © amcl

Lewis Locations

Aline Community Woodland

Escape to this peaceful woodland with lots of tracks and paths to explore. Follow the track that leads to the shore of Loch Seaforth to spot white-tailed eagles, otters and red deer. Golden eagles are often seen over the distant ridges and the woodland supports a pair of sparrow hawks.



1

© no_map_to_follow

Bayble Beach

This small beach on the peninsula of Point in Lewis is a lovely place to unwind with a sunset walk on the sand, or with a morning dip in the sea, where you'll have picturesque views of the mainland mountains and Bayble Island ahead of you.



2

© wild_north_west

Eorpie Dunes Playpark

A great park not far from Eorpie beach with nearly four acres to explore. You'll find a zip line, rope swings, climbing frames and nets. An adventure trail and a nature trail, football, basketball and skateboard areas, a maze and even a teepee! Perfect for family days out and picnics.



3

© James Smith

Gallan Head

A wonderful place to go stargazing and stand in awe of the epic dark skies. Experience the vast wonder of the stars above as you hear the sound of waves crashing below you on the rocks. Many an hour can be spent here enjoying nature at its best.

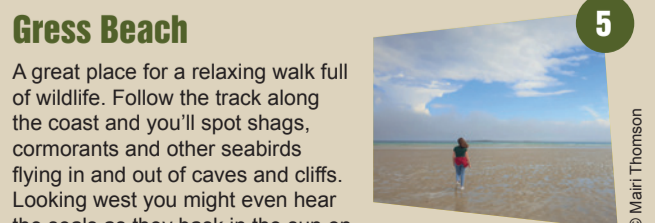


4

© Julie Sloan

Gress Beach

A great place for a relaxing walk full of wildlife. Follow the track along the coast and you'll spot shags, cormorants and other seabirds flying in and out of caves and cliffs. Looking west you might even hear the seals as they bask in the sun on the Sgeir Leathann rocks.



5

© Mairi Thomson

Loch Stiapabhat

Explore this Nature Reserve in Ness, which has a nature observatory and is the perfect place to spot peregrine, white-tailed eagle, merlin and hen harrier in addition to the resident buzzards.



6

© Laurie Campbell

Lewis



Mangersta Beach

This quiet beach is the perfect place to watch huge rollers crashing on the sand, or to catch the sunset from a tent on the hill, or down on the sand. Take a walk along the cliffs to Mangersta Bothy. Built from stone and wood, and set into the cliff edge, it's a spectacular place to spend a night.



7

© James Anderson

Newmarket Playpark

Have fun with the family at this riverside park. Situated in beautiful gardens you'll find a perfect picnic spot, playpark and a peaceful walk along the Black Glen River, and all only a short drive north of Stornoway in the village of Newmarket.



8

© Sarah Maclean

Reef Beach

Visit the quieter end of this beach and enjoy a spectacular sunset view. Walk to the far end just before a path leads off over the hill, sit by the water, in the dunes or take a dip and watch the water change colour as the sun sets over the Atlantic.



9

© James Smith

St Moluag's Church

Almost hidden from the main road in Ness, this restored medieval-era church is a peaceful spot to appreciate both history and architecture. Surrounded by local legend, theories abound on who founded the church, from St Moluag maybe, to the son of a Scandinavian king.



10

© Stornomairi

Shawbost Beach

A stunning horseshoe beach perfect for a day out with family or friends. This is a great place for outdoor swimming in the calm water and there's a picnic table at the southern end. Birdwatchers will love the open loch behind the storm beach, which makes for a rich birdwatching site.



11

© whatshedrew

Stac a'Phris

A fascinating walk to see a natural rock arch. The walk starts at Shawbost beach and you can either follow the wayfinders or hug the coast south. It follows a part of the Westside coastal route between Shawbost and Dalbeg. Bring an OS map with you.



12

© Mairi Thomson

Steinish Coastal Path

Enjoy a beautiful coastal walk just outside Stornoway in the village of Steinish. The path is wheelchair and buggy friendly, there are benches dotted along the way, and the area is well known for birdlife such as arctic terns, skylark, shelduck, oystercatchers, ringed plover, migrating waders, ducks and geese.



13

© Mairi Thomson

Uninhabited Island Locations

The Shiant Isles

When it comes to birdwatching, most people think of St Kilda – but you're just as likely to spot puffins, guillemots, and razorbills at the Shiant Isles, just off the East Coast of Harris, after a leisurely sail from Tarbert along the Lewis and Harris coastline.



© VisitScotland

Isle of Mingulay

Set sail to the south of Barra across the sparkling blue waters of the Minch on a boat trip to the Isle of Mingulay. Learn about the island's interesting history, spot puffins, seals, dolphins, gannets and if you're lucky, whales!



© West Coast Waters

St Kilda

Embark on a fascinating boat trip to St Kilda – the UK's only dual UNESCO site boasting a 4,000-year history and impressive wildlife. Explore the remaining buildings and museum, tour around the mighty sea stacks and visit the largest colony of northern gannets in Europe and the UK's largest colony of Atlantic puffins.



© James Smith

Outer Hebrides ferry crossings

On any route at all and in all weathers, the ferry crossings are a memorable part of any trip. Climb up to the top deck and take in the spectacular views, spot wildlife including dolphins if you're lucky, and breathe in the pure Hebridean air.



© Sean McFarlane

We've colour-coded the places on the maps in this Trail to help you find your special place.

- Space to Unwind
- Space for Nature
- Space to be Together
- Space to Wonder

Harris Locations

Eilean Glas Lighthouse, Scalpay

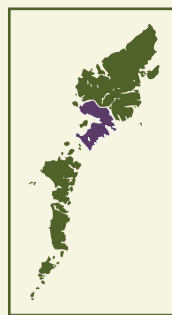
Cross the impressive Scalpay Bridge and make your way to Eilean Glas lighthouse where you can sit on the rocks and enjoy spectacular views over to Skye and the Shiant Isles. The lighthouse is one of the earliest in Scotland, and the purpose-built walk means you can enjoy viewing both it, and the magnificent scenery.



© Robert Bridge

Loch Fhionnsabhaigh

Wildlife lovers will be treated to the sight of common seals at Finsbay. Smaller than grey seals with rounder, cuter faces they're found in sheltered water close to the shore and at most states of the tide, you'll spot up to 20 hauled out on the rocks and skerries here.



Harris



Loch Scourst

A small loch located in the middle of the rolling Harris Hills at the head of Glen Meavaig. Enjoy a peaceful walk or camp here overnight under the stars. Keep your eyes peeled for eagles and deer, and if you enjoy fishing you can arrange this via Amhuinnsuidhe Estate.

© IseofHarris365

North Harris Eagle Observatory

A walk out to the Eagle Observatory in Glen Meavaig is the perfect opportunity to enjoy Hebridean nature in all its glory. On the 2km walk you'll pass a peaty river and heather-covered hills, and if you're lucky, spot not just eagles, but red deer, grouse, and ravens, too!



© ash_theadventurer

Rodel

Spend a relaxing morning or afternoon exploring this small harbour village that was once the capital of Harris. Admire the 16th century St Clement's Church – widely thought to be the grandest medieval building in the Outer Hebrides.



© Rachel Keenan



Ulladale Walk

A great spot to enjoy a walk or camp in the Harris hills. Expect stunning views, a choice of lochs to admire and wildlife including eagles and red deer. The walk is accessed via the power station road (signed as a path to Glean Ulladal). Fishing can be arranged via Amhuinnsuidhe Estate.

© James Anderson

Uist Locations



© robyn_pf

Balranald RSPB Nature Reserve, North Uist

Balranald is home to more than just a beautiful sandy beach: it's also home to an RSPB Nature Reserve, where you can spot all kinds of rare birds in the colourful machair, sand dunes, and marshes along the shore.

Culla Bay Beach, Benbecula

A stunning white sandy beach perfect for walks, picnics and in the right weather, those brave enough can enjoy a spot of swimming or even surfing in the cool, sparkling waters. Listen out for the elusive corncrake and keep your eyes peeled for oystercatcher, lapwing, redshanks and more.



© Lìona Cleit

Foraging, North Uist and Benbecula

If you're here between August and October enjoy the outdoors by foraging for heather flowers and brambles. If you take your day's harvest to North Uist Distillery they will give you gin in return. A great active day out with family or friends with a tasty reward at the end!



© Lìona Cleit

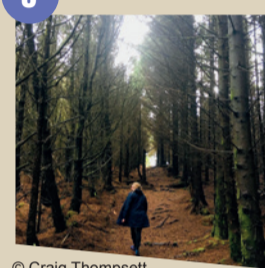


© Mick Blunt

Hecla, South Uist

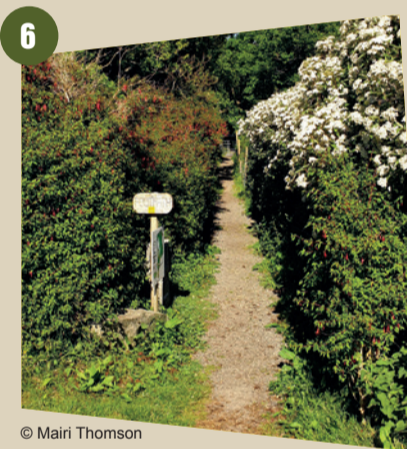
Hecla is a great, but challenging walk that rewards your efforts with unrivalled panoramic views to soothe the soul. From the top on a clear day you'll be able to see St Kilda, Skye and Rum, and the mosaic of over 600 lochs that make up South Uist.

Langass Woodland, North Uist



© Craig Thompsett

Enjoy a peaceful walk through the woods and keep your eyes peeled for any unexpected furry visitors. This is where a grizzly bear escaped while filming a commercial in 1980. He was safely recaptured, but not before achieving international celebrity. Kids will love following the Bear Paw Print Trail and the life-sized statue of Hercules.



© Mairi Thomson

North Loch Eynort, South Uist

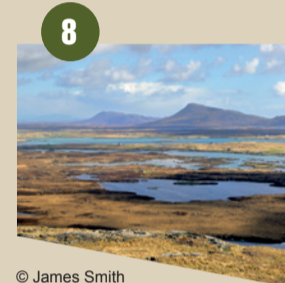
Head to the north shore and enjoy a relaxing walk on the trails. Admire the scenery and listen out for the distinctive call of the cuckoo. Keep your eyes peeled for small birds such as meadow pipits, and in spring and summer, you'll easily spot red throated divers.



© Lìona Cleit

Paddleboarding, Eriskay

Explore Uist at your own pace and hire a paddleboard or join a guided excursion. Admire resident wildlife whilst on the water, meet new people as part of a group session and have fun on the sparkling waters of Uist.



© James Smith

Reuval, Benbecula

Enjoy a wonderful walk up a relatively small hill, with amazing views and the chance of spotting impressive birds of prey – particularly golden eagles. It forms part of the Hebridean Way so just follow the signs.



© VisitScotland

Rubha Ardvule, South Uist

The most westerly point on South Uist is the perfect place to tune into nature, relax and recharge. A rocky outcrop sticking out into the sea with long stretches of beach on both sides, it's a haven for wildlife, including seals, dolphins and wader birds nesting on the neighbouring machair.



© Andrew Ross

Seal Viewing Point, Berneray

Located on the island of Berneray joined to North Uist by causeway, the seal colony in Bays Loch is a must-visit. Watch the seals displaying at high tide, and hauling out on the rocks for a rest at low tide. You may also spot an otter on one of the beaches nearby.

Vallay, North Uist

A tidal island off the coast of North Uist with great beaches, machair and abundant wildlife. It's been deserted since 1945 when George Beveridge, then owner, was killed in a boating accident. Beveridge owned a linen manufacturer in Dunfermline and was a keen historian and photographer, publishing a number of books.



© Iainsrannnach

Barra Locations

Borve Machair

Head to the village of Borve on the west coast of Barra and explore the impressive machair – a fertile low lying grassy plain bustling with wildflowers, plants, bird and insect life – that is one of the rarest habitats in Europe, and only occurs on exposed western coasts of Scotland and Ireland.



© Emma Paterson

Brevig Standing Stone

See the only standing stone of any size still standing on Barra and let your mind go back thousands of years to imagine how it got there. The standing stone is situated above the village of Brevig a 300m-walk uphill, north towards a derelict building.



© Richard Barra

Community Woodland, Northbay

You may have heard the Outer Hebrides is treeless, but that's not quite accurate. Visitors looking for woodlands have a few choices across the islands. Head to Northbay and you'll find a very pleasant area of mixed woodland where the dominant species is sycamore. A beautiful spot to relax and unwind.

Cuithir Church

Visit the church at Cuithir that was built around 1820 during the time of Roderick the Gentle, the 40th Chief of Barra who granted the land so that the church could be built. Today, the church is the only Church of Scotland parish on the island.

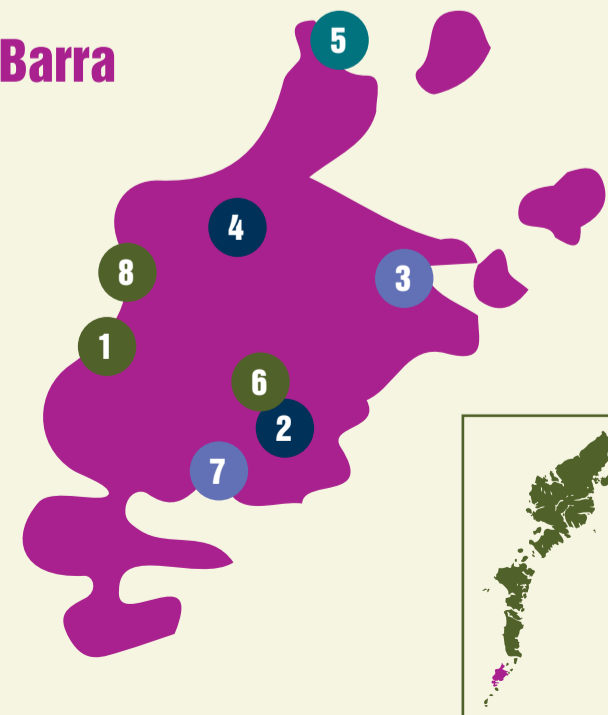
Eoligarry Beach

A windblown sandy beach popular with surfers and a great spot for wildlife. You'll see crabs, grey seals, sea otters and migratory birds. Kids will love the rock pools and the dunes are covered in wildflowers in early summer. Best reached on foot by walking across the field leading to the dunes from Barra Airport.



© Steve Cormley

Barra



Heaval

Take a walk up Barra's highest summit and enjoy spectacular panoramic views. Look out for a statue of the Virgin and Child, known locally as Our Lady of the Sea. If you visit in early July, you may see the Heaval race with live music to enjoy in the square before and afterwards.



© Rachel Keenan

Herring Walk

Enjoy a short walk around the bay and learn the story of the historic herring industry on Barra. Now, a peaceful spot where you can imagine a bustling bay once filled with so many fishing boats that it's said you could walk boat to boat without dipping your feet in the water.



© VisitScotland

Seal Bay

The perfect spot to see seals on the offshore reefs and hear their distinctive cries. Park opposite the postbox at the North Allasdale road junction and walk across the machair, through the dunes to this sparkling beach. There are rock pools galore to keep the kids (and big kids) happy!