Sail Hebrides

Explore the finest cruising and wilderness in the British Isles - the Outer Hebrides.

“Outer Hebrides, Sailing Directions & Anchorages” published by the Clyde Cruising Club.

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The long summer days give you more time to enjoy all that the Outer Hebrides has to offer and the leisure to plan your next trip as you surely will want to come back again and again.

Sailing in the Outer Hebrides

What to know, what to prepare for

If you have explored other coastal areas around the North Sea, the Baltic, the English Channel, the Atlantic coast of France or the Irish Sea and are looking for new places to sail in Europe you should have few problems on the west coast of Scotland and sailing the Western Isles. The Clyde Cruising Club’s Outer Hebrides is the only sailing directions describing yacht anchorages and inshore passages in the Western Isles and is essential reading. Charts can be selected from the Admiralty Chart Catalogue (NP109).

The main centres of Stornoway, Lochmaddy, Lochboisdale and Castlebay (all Outer Hebrides ferry ports) make good first landing points in the Western Isles. Rapid changes of conditions are more frequent in the Outer Hebrides than anywhere else in Scotland and you must be prepared. As a result unexpected adverse conditions may arise which may test your boat and your crew – be prepared.

This information is for guidance only, not to be used for navigation.

Passage to the Outer Hebrides

What to know, what to prepare for

Looking to sail to the Western Isles? There are three main ways to cross to these wonderful islands. Crossing the Sea of the Hebrides, the distance from Canna to Loch Boisdale is 25 miles and is the shortest sailing route to the Outer Hebrides for boats coming from the south. Crossing the Little Minch - forms an area about 16 miles wide between Skye and Harris. The preferred sea crossing to the Western Isles here is from Dunvegan or Uig on Skye to avoid the outfall hazards to the north west of Skye. Crossing the North Minch - more exposed in the strong northerly winds which can build up a swell.

The distance of this sailing crossing to the Outer Hebrides is also greater than that of the Little Minch, however, the reduced tidal streams can make for a simpler passage plan. From the North of Skye to Loch Shell it is 20 miles, passing east of the

(Maritime heritage of the outer Hebrides)

A Start to Sailing in the Hebrides – by Ian Stephen

I was born, one street back from the ‘hoil’ of SY harbour and grew up in one of the Terraces which housed so many families, moved into the town, for work, from rural areas of Lewis. But the kids still found their way to the piers, to jump on bales of wool, come to feed the Harris Tweed mills which were busy then, turning out warps to deliver to weavers out on their crofts. We gathered the spoil of herring by the neat heaps of corked black cotton mesh. I studied the raked Zulu sterns of the Lilac and the Daffodil. We could all intone the names of the small trawlers which were beginning to serve the international appetite for nephrops – simply prawns to us.

Now, in 2014, the klondykers come no more for herring, the number of trawlers has fallen to the smallest in my lifetime. High steel piles have been driven into the bed of the ‘hoil’ to take an impressive system of pontoon berths, serviced with electrical power and ready for the needs of a developing leisure industry.

Explore...


**Lewis East Coast**
- North of Stornoway
- Loch Tarbert & Loch Maolgob
- Loch Tarbert
- Loch Brora
- Loch Naosaik & Loch Drum
- Loch Seaforth
- The Shiant Isles

**Stornoway**
- New Pontoon
- New Marina

**Scalpay**
- Inlets and bays
- Miles of white shell beaches
- Birdwatching, freshwater lochs, angling and golf
- Cruising round South Uist (Uibhirt a Deas)

**South Uist**
- Inlets and bays
- Miles of white shell beaches
- Birdwatching, freshwater lochs, angling and golf
- Cruising round South Uist (Uibhirt a Deas)

**Harris East Coast**
- Beautiful rugged coastline, mountains, machair and spectacular sand beaches, trips to St Kilda

**Atlantic Coast**
- Wild and wonderful, St Kilda - World Heritage Site, weather forecasts and passage planning

**Barra**
- Island hopping, visitor moorings, cockleshell beaches, all facilities, the craic

**Lewis East Coast**
- Stornoway’s new marina, all facilities, wild anchorages and the Shiant, culture and heritage

**Stornoway**
- The largest harbour in the Western Isles, Stornoway is well sheltered and easy to enter at all states of the tide. The newly installed 70 pontoon berth provides mooring for crews sailing in the Outer Hebrides and also gives walking access to the town with all the facilities you would expect including airport and ferry terminal.

**Naosaidh**
- All sheltered sea anchorages
- Loch Tarbert & Loch Maolgob
- Loch Brora
- Loch Naosaik & Loch Drum
- Loch Seaforth
- The Shiant Isles

**Stirling’s new pontoon berth**
- Small sea coastal indentations
- Each with a small community
- Offering wild anchorages on the east coast of Harris.

**Rodel**
- A sheltered pool
- Offering visitor moorings and there is a small hotel and restaurant close by.

**Roan Bay**
- There is a portion in the Harris ferry port of Leverburgh and the nearby Sound of Harris gives access to the Atlantic Coast and St Kilda. Tarbert, the main centre boasts shopping, banking and tourist information facilities as well as a selection of Harris accommodation and eateries.

**Shiant Isles**
- A drop anchor on the east coast of Harris and you can visit spectacular island beaches, archelogical sites, take boat trips to St Kilda and other outlying islands, enjoy a selection of wildlife walks and even a trip to the Harris eagle observatory.

**Sound of Harris**
- Boat trips to St Kilda and other outlying islands, enjoy a selection of wildlife walks and even a trip to the Harris eagle observatory.

**The Sound of Barra**
- A new fully serviced ferry terminal.

**The Monach Isles, Taransay, West Loch Tarbert, Scarp and Loch Roag**
- With a patchwork of peat bogs, lochs with wild anchorages for boats sailing around the Mar and finally Loch Seaforth - all sheltered sea anchorages for boats sailing around the west coast.

**St Kilda**
- The ultimate Scottish Heritage Site, weather forecasts and passage planning

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**Images with thanks from Moonshadow Yacht Charter Ltd, P. Tomkins, VisitScotland, Scottish Viewpoint**

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**VisitScotland, Scottish Viewpoint**

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**Harbours**
- Lochboisdale
- Eriskay
- Lochinver
- Uplands
- Vatersay
- Castlebay

**Anchorages**
- South Uist and Benbecula
- Benbecula
- Vatersay
- Eriskay
- South Uist (Uibhirt), Vatersay
- Barra
- The Sound of Barra
- North Uist
- Crossay
- Westray
- Islands to the south of Barra

**The Monarch Isles**
- Taransay
- West Loch Tarbert
- Scarp and Loch Roag

**South Uist**
- Inlets and bays, miles of white shell beaches, birdwatching, freshwater lochs, angling and golf

**Leachlatherdale**
- All sheltered sea anchorages
- Loch Tarbert & Loch Maolgob
- Loch Brora
- Loch Naosaik & Loch Drum
- Loch Seaforth
- The Shiant Isles

**New Pontoon**
- The Island is covered with a patchwork of peat bogs, low hills and lochans, with more than half the land being covered by water. This results in spectacular views with reflections of the sky and clouds in the water.