Our islands offer great opportunities to explore the outdoors, with walks providing you with the chance to get close to nature, history and heritage of our islands or just to get out, enjoy the fresh air and get fit.

Choose coastal walks around the Outer Hebrides or opt for wildlife walks, such as hiking through the nature reserves or walks to spot eagles, deer and other exciting island inhabitants.

History lovers can choose to walk the Bonnie Prince Charlie trail in Uist whole or part, while a selection of hiking trails take in historic sites and monuments providing ample points of interest along the way.

Whether you are looking for leisurely strolls along island beaches, or challenging hikes through rugged mountain terrain, walking on our islands gives you a chance to really connect with the outdoors and keep fit at the same time.

Outdoor Safety
Staying safe whilst walking is mostly a matter of common sense:

- Check the weather forecast before you set out.
- Take appropriate clothing – these walks may cover some rough, wet ground, so wear your boots. A jacket is always advisable.
- Take extra care as some of these walks are along steep cliffs. This walk is not for windy days!
- Carry water and a bite to eat.
- Always tell someone where you are going and when you expect to be back.
- Always bring a compass and map with you.

Scottish Outdoor Access Code
In Scotland we have some of the best access laws in the world – we have the right to walk on most land provided we behave responsibly and respect the rights of others. Full information on access rights and responsibilities can be found at www.outdooraccess-scotland.com

If you keep to the following guidelines you won’t go far wrong:

- Do not disturb livestock or wildlife.
- Keep dogs under control, especially at lambing time.
- Leave gates as you found them.
- Take all your litter home.

“Explore a strangely-shaped peninsula where sea and sand meet under a magic, open sky. Follow shorelines and paths through flower-studded fields to an old cemetery for another island. Climb a hill for fabulous views, and return via untrodden coves and ancient archaeological sites that rank as some of the most important in the Outer Hebrides.”

For more information and to download other walking routes, visit:
www.visitouterhebrides.co.uk
Explore a strangely-shaped peninsula where sea and sand meet under a magic, open sky. Follow shorelines and paths through flower-studded fields to an old cemetery for another island.

Climb a hill for fabulous views, and return via untroddeon coves and ancient archaeological sites that rank as some of the most important in the Outer Hebrides. Along the way, you’ll barely see a soul. You will feel as though you are the only folk in the world, though history will surround you, and who knows what birds you will chance upon.

The Inland Sea

1 Park at the picnic area along the minor road that leaves the A865 at Grenetoin. Follow the track, crossing the burn on stepping-stones (or go left a little way to find the bridge). Continue round the vast beach-bowl expanse of Traigh Ear. Depending on the tide, you could venture out onto the sands, or keep to the track around the edge of the fields. Far out is the strange spit of Corran Aird a Mhorain, a broken series of dunes enclosing the other side of the Traigh Ear bowl like a breakwater. Wading birds may fill the air with their calls. Above the fields, there may be Skylarks, and perhaps the jangling key calls of Corn Bunting. Aim for the corner where the sand spit leaves the mainland. Pass through the broken dunes leaving the inland sea behind.

Peace and Quiet

Towards the Trig Point

3 It’s time to climb the hill: just head up from the cemetery. Even though it is only 40 metres high, it feels like a sharp tug up to the trig point. From the top, the view on a clear day is fantastic - across to the distant hills of Harris and the islands in the Sound, round to curving Berneray and back to North Uist. The seas will be different colours and textures in every direction. Below, to the north, there’s a boggy area and low rock platforms where gannets and ducks gather and feed. In June, there’s a splash of yellow irises. Below to the south-east and south-west, white sandy beaches. The peninsula you have been walking on is a tombolo, a feature where an island (where you are standing now) is linked to the mainland (where you started) by deposited sand.

Dunes & Beaches

4 Drop yourself away from the view and descend to the south. Go down, then up and down, and find a path through the dunes. The caves here are fascinating; you may find otter tracks (five toes) and see many birds along the shorelines. On a sunny day, this can be the place to linger or enjoy a picnic lunch.

Wheelhouses & Other Buildings

5 These are the archaeological sites of Udal. Local tradition calls it Veilish, once a major medieal settlement. Excavations from the 1960s onwards by Iain Crawford have revealed successive layers: houses overwhelmed by sandblows in the 1690s, Viking enclosures (perhaps a fort) and turf buildings. Lower still were older buildings, known to the archaeologists as “jelly baby” houses after their shape. Nearby are four Iron Age stane wheelhouses. Confusingly, these were probably not houses, or particularly wheel-shaped, but aisled, semi-dug-out ritual buildings. Lower still were remains from the Neolithic and Bronze Ages. The former predate the formation of the machair - the sandy environment is a relatively recent phenomenon. Follow the track towards Rubha Bellis, taking the left fork. Maybe visit the perfect long curve of Traigh Tar beach, before taking the main track across the fields. It cuts inland between two fences to cross the peninsula back towards Traigh Ear. Cross the burn to return to the car park.

The Cemetery

2 Once through the dunes, the beach becomes rockier after a while: it’s easier to take the track through the machair fields. These sandy soils, formed from shell fragments blown inland, are lime-rich and boast a riot of colourful flowers in summer. The tracks wander, but keep to the sea to your right and you won’t go far wrong. Look out across the now deeper waters and you may see gannets or terns diving for fish. Raptors may surprise you as they hunt among the dunes. The track leads to the cemetery of the Macleans of Berneray, the island directly south-west of here. The large tomb is that of John Maclean, the last laird on the island, who was buried in 1829. It’s worth investigating the lichen covered stub-toothed old stones (and more modern topped ones), pondering past lives on now almost deserted islands.

Aim for the corner where the sand spit leaves the mainland. Pass through the broken dunes leaving the inland sea behind.

“Machair Pansies”

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