

# In brief

**Category:** Moderate walk

**Map Reference:** OS Landranger 31 and Pathfinder NF71 / 81 / NF60 / 70

**Walking Distance:** 8.5km / 5.25 miles

**Time:** Allow 3 hours



Our walking and cycling routes are part of a series of self-guided trails through the Outer Hebrides. For more information scan here.



[www.visitouterhebrides.co.uk](http://www.visitouterhebrides.co.uk)  
[www.visitouterhebrides.co.uk/apps](http://www.visitouterhebrides.co.uk/apps)



**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 the Bonnie Prince Charlie trail walks in Uist, 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.



For more information and to download other walking and cycling routes, visit: [www.visitouterhebrides.co.uk](http://www.visitouterhebrides.co.uk)

## Outdoor Safety

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

- Check the weather forecast before you set out
- Wear appropriate clothing and footwear
- Always tell your accommodation owners what time you expect to arrive
- Always bring a map and compass with you – and know how to use them
- Take bus timetables and phone numbers for local taxis in case you have problems on the walk or return [www.visitouterhebrides.co.uk/visitor-info](http://www.visitouterhebrides.co.uk/visitor-info)
- Ticks are often found in the heather. Dress appropriately to avoid them hitching a lift! Cover your arms and make sure your trousers are tucked into your socks and check yourself after walking. Further advice can be found at: [www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Lyme-disease](http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Lyme-disease)
- Similarly, midges are prevalent at certain times of year. Wear repellent and they will be less likely to bother you!

## Scottish Outdoor Access Code

Scotland has some of the best access laws in the world - you have the right to walk on most land, provided you behave responsibly and respect the rights of others. Full information on access rights and responsibilities can be found at: [www.outdooraccess-scotland.com](http://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
- Park your car without blocking access for other vehicles.

**“This stunning walk takes in views of the Sound of Eriskay where the S.S Politician ran aground, St Michael’s Church, the stunning white sands of Bonnie Prince Charlie’s Beach (Coilleag a’Phrionnsa), the Statue of Our Lady of Fatima and hopefully some Eriskay ponies along the way!”**

Bonnie Prince Charlie cairn



Explore...

## Drive across the causeway from South Uist and discover the delights the island of Eriskay has to offer.

This walk takes in spectacular views from Loch Crakavaig to the stunning white sands of Bonnie Prince Charlie's Beach (Coilleag a'Phrionnsa), the Statue of Our Lady of Fatima and hopefully some Eriskay ponies along the way!

Starting at the community hall, (parking available) the route follows the road towards am Baile, passing am Politician, the cemetery, along Coilleag a'Phrionnsa beach and over to Acarsaid. The route then returns back via the water station at Loch Crakavaig and along the main road back to the community centre.

### S.S Politician

**1** From the community hall turn left and walk up a small hill. Turn left down into Baile and on your right, you will see the local pub 'Am Politician', named after the S.S Politician. The 8,000 ton cargo ship S.S Politician ran aground in the Sound of Eriskay. Her cargo was general but causing the most excitement was the contents of Number Five hold - 22,000 cases of whisky!

It was February 1941, the difficult years of World War 2 and life was hard. Goods were hard to come by in the island and none more so than whisky. To the people of Eriskay and the surrounding islands the 'Polly' was a Godsend. They raided, they plundered and as one can imagine, they had a jolly good time. Some of the events which followed the grounding of the ship inspired Compton Mackenzie's famous novel and Whisky Galore films.

Eriskay causeway



**“Loch Crakavaig is the source of Eriskay's fresh water supply. In this area keep an eye out for a glimpse of the rare Eriskay ponies. These ponies, Scotland's native horse can be traced unchanged throughout history.”**

### Father Allan Macdonald

**2** Go past the new cemetery to visit the old one beyond. Along the right-hand wall is the grave of Father Allan Macdonald, a man remarkable for his time. Originally from Lochaber, he came to Eriskay in 1894. Whilst here he built St Michaels Church, in its elevated position overlooking almost all of the parish to replace the existing thatched

building which the islanders had used for worship since 1852. Father Allan is however better remembered as a poet, bard and a Gaelic scholar, making important collections of folktales and producing a dictionary of Gaelic words from South Uist and Eriskay. He was the inspiration of many a Gaelic scholar at the time. He died and was buried in Eriskay in 1905 aged only 46.

Coilleag a' Phrionnsa beach



### Coilleag a'Phrionnsa

**3** Follow the track from the old graveyard and you will come to Coilleag a' Phrionnsa beach. On July 23rd 1745 that Charles Edward Stuart (Bonnie Prince Charlie) arrived in his sloop 'Le Du Teillay' to begin the great Jacobite Rising of 1745-46.

Walk about three quarters of the way along the beach to Sgeir na h-Airidh Samhraidh, the small outcrop of rocks on the shore, where the Prince is reputed to have stepped ashore on Scottish soil. Directly up from these rocks, on top of the dune, is the cairn erected by the schoolchildren of Eriskay to mark the spot. Look out for the

pink convolvulus flower which is said to have grown from seeds gathered by Charles while he was waiting on the French coast and which subsequently dropped from his pocket on his arrival in Eriskay. The flowers are usually in bloom in July/August.

You can also follow in his footsteps along the Bonnie Prince Charlie trail which starts in Eriskay. [www.bonnieprincecharlietrail.co.uk](http://www.bonnieprincecharlietrail.co.uk)

Walk right along to the other end of the beach and walk up the footpath, which will take you up to the main road. Turn left along the road and then turn right at the junction towards Acarsaid.

Eriskay Shop and Community centre



### Acarsaid

**4** Follow the road to the harbour and when you reach the trees you should notice the paintings depicting the Stations of the Cross on the rock face up to the right. Follow the paintings up the hill. They were painted in 1970 by the parish priest at the time Father Calum Macneill on slates taken from the Parish Church, St Michaels when it was re-slated. At the top you will be rewarded with a panoramic view.

Descend the hill and continue along the road to the right. Off the road, on your left, a strange rock formation (some 12m long) is indicated by a waymarker. Follow the way markers across a stile, along the shore and up the hill fence until you see a lily covered loch hidden away in a small dip. Nearby at the end of the walk is a secluded little bay where you might catch sight of otters.

Retrace your steps and head back along the road towards the junction at the main road. Before you reach the junction, turn up to the right to Loch Crakavaig.

### Loch Crakavaig

**5** Follow the track on the short climb up to Loch Crakavaig, past the water station and enjoy the spectacular view.

Loch Crakavaig is the source of Eriskay's fresh water supply. In this area keep an eye out for a glimpse of the rare Eriskay ponies. These ponies, Scotland's native horse can be traced unchanged throughout history. Now numbering less than 300 in the United Kingdom (only around 20 in Eriskay) they are recognised as endangered and registered as such by the

Rare Breeds Survival Trust. Comann Each nan Eilean (The Eriskay Pony Society) was founded in 1972 to save the breed from extinction. The ponies are very amenable, docile and intelligent and because of their hardiness relatively easy to keep especially in their natural habitat.

Descend the hill and join the main road. You will pass the Statue of Our Lady of Fatima, erected on the site of the original Catholic church of Eriskay and you will eventually end up back at the community centre.

View over to South Uist from Eriskay

