

Chapter 1 : Orkney and Shetland Islands Travel Guide | Fodor's Travel

Visit an ancient site. Mainland (the largest of the Orkney Islands) was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in , and it's packed with prehistoric treasures. Start off with a visit to the.

Have you ever noticed the way you rarely realise how hectic and stressful life can be until you get away from all the stresses and you suddenly realise how calm you are. You get away from the chores and the obligations and that pile of washing that just never seems to get any smaller! You escape to somewhere where the only noise is the faint rush of the wind and birds chirping nearby. And this is when you realise how calm you are. You sit down and drink a cup of coffee and actually taste it, rather than glugging it down as a means to stay awake during a busy day. You might even be lucky enough to drink it outside in the sunshine, looking out to a breath taking view of mountains and calm seas while wild rabbits hop about in the distance. This is exactly how I felt and exactly what I got during our family holiday to the Orkney Islands. But not just in distance. Our family holiday to the Orkney Islands was peaceful but busy. It was a week filled with fresh air, good food, lots of exploring and lots of adventures. It was a good old fashioned holiday, the way holidays are meant to be. We flew up to Aberdeen and then it was a minute bus journey from the airport to Aberdeen Union Square and then a minute walk to the ferry 5 minutes without toddlers, 10 minutes with! The ferry takes six hours and departs at 5pm on the outbound journey. There are comfortable lounges and bars, a cinema, a restaurant and a few shops to explore. We decided to get a cabin which was brilliant for the boys. The kids all made friends and spent a couple of hours playing, reading books, dressing up as Vikings and watching films in the soft play area and then we put them to bed at about 7. On our return journey we took the same ferry but this time it departs from Kirkwall at Taxis are available but you really need your own wheels to see this beautiful island properly. We hired our car through WR Tullock , based in the centre of Kirkwall. We arranged to keep our car until our final night on Orkney, so we dropped it off at their office at Sam actually dropped me and the kids and our luggage off at the ferry at We also took a taxi to our accommodation when we first arrived because we were too late to pick up our car. There are three beautiful, Norwegian style chalets in Orphir. Ours had two bedrooms, one bathroom and a huge open-plan living area with a kitchen, dining area and sitting area. Enormous windows looked across the water and straight to Hoy, an island opposite which creates the most incredible view. Sitting on the bench outside, soaking up the sun and watching the little rabbits hop across grass and boats passing in the distance was a highlight from our trip. Kathy, the owner, also left us lots of things for the boys like special seats to help them sit at the table and toddler cutlery and plastic plates. Something Kathy suggested in a welcome email was to have a Tesco food delivery booked for the morning after we arrived. I did this and it was a brilliant idea so massive thanks to Kathy for that suggestion! There is a Tesco and a Lidl in Kirkwall but it was so nice to have it all arrive with no stress or hassle, especially after a late arrival the evening before. Here are some of my favourite things to do in the Orkney Islands. Things to do in the Orkney Islands Orkney Museum and Gardens This free family-friendly museum is a great place to start your trip, as it tells the story of Orkney through the ages, starting with the Stone Age and continuing right up to the present. The museum is located in Tankerness House " which has its own year history " and in its restored rooms, visitors can discover artefacts dating back to over 5, years ago. It was founded in by a Viking called Earl Rognvald, as a place to lay his uncle Magnus to rest. The imposing sandstone building is impressive to look at from the outside as well as within its walls, and the degree views from the top of the tower are well worth the visit alone. Broch of Gurness One of the incredible things about Orkney is how well many of its ancient monuments and archaeological sites have been preserved. One such site is the Broch of Gurness, an Iron Age settlement that can still be visited and admired today. This was one of the highlights of our trip and it was such a stunning place to visit. Not only is it a site of cultural significance, but this hard-to-reach location is also stunning to explore, with gorgeous views, a modern lighthouse, puffins and sea birds, and a church and monastery. Keep an eye out for Groatie Buckies, a local name for Cowrie Shells, which are said to bring good luck to those who find them. This gorgeous little teashop has delicious food, great views and the most amazing homemade cakes. He was a notorious tyrant, ruling as the Earl of Orkney

from his palace in the late s. Visitors can explore the ruins at their leisure, imagining it in its heyday. RSPB Nature Reserve at Marwick head, West Mainland Puffins and gannets are the real drawcard at this beautiful nature reserve, but the panoramic views along the coastline come a close second. The walking route along the clifftop is around 5 kilometres, and should take about two hours to complete. Sheila Fleet Gallery and Cafe Sheila Fleet is a jewellery designer in Orkney and has beautiful collections of unique and colourful jewellery. You can also visit the workshop and see some of the pieces being made. It was also really nice to see all the people making these individual items. The family have recently opened The Kirk Gallery and Cafe. The food is delicious and children are very welcome. Explore the streets that hug the shoreline, stroll through the small alleyways of Stromness and pop into shops, pubs and cafes. Art lovers will enjoy the Pier Arts Centre, a modern art gallery, and everyone will love a treat from Orkney Ice Cream, which was recently voted the best artisan ice cream in the UK. Skara Brae is a Neolithic settlement that was built before Stonehenge. As well as the village itself, there are replica homes that allow visitors to imagine what life was really like in prehistoric times, and a visitor centre that includes artefacts found on the site, such as jewellery and tools. Skaill Beach The beach next to Skara Brae is absolutely idyllic with pure white sand and crashing waves. It is also nicely sheltered so we spent a long time playing here and trying to convince the boys not to knock the stone circles down! Walk on the cliffs of Yesnaby, West Mainland This easy cliffside walk takes about an hour and a half, and promises incredible views of sea stacks also known locally as Yesnaby Castle , blowholes and stunning inlets known as geos. Take care when the ground is wet, as the walk can be slippery. The Ring of Brodgar and Standing Stones of Stenness This stone circle is considered to be one of the finest of its kind in the world, dating back to the third millennium BC. The Ring of Brodgar is an enormous prehistoric ceremonial site, metres wide and originally containing sixty megaliths, thirty-six of which have survived to the present day. Nearby is the Standing Stones of Stenness, which could be the oldest henge monument in the British Isles. This stone circle is another well-known site in Orkney, originally made up of 12 stones dating from the same time as the Ring of Brodgar. There are now 4 stones remaining. Maeshowe Chambered Cairn These chambered tombs are five millenia old, and yet, incredibly, they still survive today. The entrance to the cairn was engineered so that the midwinter sun would shine inside the chamber, illuminating the dark interior. Stromness and Warebeth walk One of the best ways to experience Orkney is by foot, taking one of the many scenic routes available. The Stromness and Warebeth walk is a popular circuit along a coastal path via Citadel Viewpoint, which overlooks Hoy and the western entrance to Scapa Flow. The distance is 8. Look out for seals along the way! Brinkies Brae Climb the granite hill behind Stromness for amazing views that stretch for miles. Not only is it a fun walk with a rewarding panorama at the top, but it has a great history, too. In the 18th century, Brinkies Brae was inhabited by an old lady called Bessie Millie, who would sell weather forecasts to sailors. Kids will love meeting and feeding friendly farmyard creatures, and afterwards the whole family can enjoy afternoon tea in the barn. Mandy and Nick run the farm with their daughter Ellen and they are quite possibly the nicest couple I have ever met. George and Joseph adored them and it was wonderful to have such a hands on, personalised farm experience. George is very nervous with animals but Mandy and Nick helped bring him out of his shell and within 20 minutes he was feeding the pigs and goats and Nick had George in fits of giggles while Sam and I enjoyed a cup of tea and homemade cakes. If you plan to visit you need to prebook as Mandy and Nick cater to small groups. Orkney Fossil and Heritage Centre Located in a series of 19th century farm buildings on the island of Burray, this museum and visitor centre is home to an extensive rock and fossil collection, including now-extinct fish that lived in Lake Orcadie some million years ago. There are also exhibitions that show what life was like in Orkney throughout the ages. This is probably more one for adults and older children. Tomb of the Eagles in South Ronaldsay Discovered by local farmer Ronnie Simison in the s, this incredible archaeological site is a Stone Age tomb that houses artefacts and bones from around 5, years ago. Perched dramatically at the edge of a cliff on South Ronaldsay, the location only adds to the appeal of this popular attraction. Start at the visitor centre, and walk to the site the route is just one mile past a Bronze Age building, then access the tomb itself by lying on a trolley that will transport you through the small tunnel and into the main chamber. Pack a lunch to enjoy on the beach, and keep your eyes peeled for local wildlife and breathtaking views. Enjoy the drive And finally, my guide to Orkney would not be complete without

suggestion you simply go out in your car and get lost. We did this a lot and loved stumbling across beautiful beaches and amazing sights. And there you have it. My guide to the Orkney Islands and some of the highlights from my trip there.

Chapter 2 : Orkney, a guide to the islands | NorthLink Ferries

Orkney's second largest town is an architectural gem, an inspiration for artists and writers, and a firm favourite with visitors. West Mainland. In the West Mainland, you'll discover a magical prehistoric landscape - The Heart of Neolithic Orkney UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Between the boat and wave-pounded cliff base a brace of curious seal monitor our progress, as clouds of puffin whirl overhead, their beaks crammed with sand eels. And embedded just offshore - like green jewels on a storm-tossed sea of blue - lie the bountiful islands of Orkney. This small archipelago may cover less than square kilometers, but it has long played an instrumental role in the life and times of the region. Boasting a vaunted and unbroken record of Neolithic tomb building, Viking sagas, clan lords, feuding kings and wartime drama, an almost palpable sense of time pervades Orkney like an unseen cloak, reinforcing the feeling of remoteness. Nevertheless, the warmth of the welcome, spectacular wildlife and top notch local cuisine means "the edge" soon starts to feel a lot like home. It was only comparatively recently, in the fifteenth century, that the archipelago became part of Scotland. While the islands are now indisputably Scottish, their inhabitants are Orcadians before anything else. An even more astonishing discovery was made on the island of Westray a couple of years ago, when archaeologists found the year old Orkney Venus known locally as the "Westray Wife", a small female figurine made of stone. At its centre lie the great stone circles of Brodgar and Stenness, the magnificent chambered tomb of Maeshowe, and the stunningly preserved village of Skara Brae - complete with stone dressers and beds, drains and hearths. Impressive remains can be found everywhere, at a density unequalled anywhere else in Europe. Dating from around BC, the Ring of Brodgar is a magnificent stone circle occupying a scenic location between two lakes on the mainland of the Orkney Islands. The natural dualities of this beautiful and dramatic location - land and water, freshwater and saltwater, sunrise and sunset probably played a role in the choice of location. Watching the sun set over the loch behind the ancient Neolithic stones in autumn really adds an extra mystical dimension. Orkney Wildlife Orkney Wildlife Nature lovers from around the globe are drawn to Orkney because of the abundance of birds and marine fauna that inhabit the islands throughout the year. Wildlife is everywhere on the archipelago - oystercatchers wading in wetland meadows, short-eared owls glaring at passers-by from roadside fence-posts, schools of whales, dolphins and porpoises patrolling coastal waters in summer, and hundreds upon thousands of breeding seabirds congregating on vertiginous cliff faces. The grey seals have pups in October, and autumn and winter are also a great time to see waders, divers, ducks and geese. When it comes to island fauna, nature has a tendency to reward the patient with unexpected sights - a pair of puffins waddling among hordes of quarreling guillemots, or a peregrine falcon nestling under the lip of a cliff, surveying its domain with a cruel yellow eye. Hobbister Scenery, Orkney, Scotland Orkney Weather Winds are so strong on Orkney that trees are a rarity throughout the islands, and when they do manage to struggle up, they often grow bowed over, as if cowering before the weather. The uninterrupted sky and lack of vegetation mean that the best views are often composed of horizontal lines. You can often see far enough to make out more than one weather system at a time - wisps of rain out to sea, rainbows smuggled behind black clouds, sunlight beaming a god-like finger on a distant cottage or barn. And winter also brings with it the possibility of the Northern Lights, or the Merry Dancers, as they are known on Orkney. Whether born on the islands or drawn to settle by the light and lifestyle, Orkney is full of artists happy to share their enthusiasm and inspiration. By following the well-signposted Orkney Craft Trail visitors can witness the work of both local and visiting fine artists in small private galleries and open studios around the main Orkney island Mainland and various smaller islands. From paint, photography and fashion to sculpture, pottery and jewellery, much of this work is sold in the shops of Kirkwall, Stromness, Dounby and St. Today crops are grown and livestock reared in pretty much the same way as they were when the archipelago was under Viking rule. The harvest of the seas is perhaps even harder won than the lands. But the bravery and skill of Orcadian fishermen bring the incomparable pleasure of the finest lobsters, crabs and fish. Spoots are razor clams, a popular delicacy, and the hunting of them walking backwards across the sands at low tide, knife and bucket at the ready is a popular pastime. Hand-dived scallops, organic salmon, mackerel

caught in a nearby bay, mussels and lobster from local creels small inlets all feature when in season. Distillery tours offer a fascinating insight into the traditional art of whisky making, culminating with a sampling session in the bar area. I also find it quite nutty, with hints of apples, but that could be my strange taste buds. Renting a car is definitely a good way to get the most out of your trip to the The Orkney Islands.

Chapter 3 : 12+ Things to do in Orkney Scotland - Practical Guide (History + Nature!)

Our family holiday to the Orkney Islands was peaceful but busy. There's a lot to do for such a small place and it was fantastic with children because they could run wild on the empty beaches. It was a week filled with fresh air, good food, lots of exploring and lots of adventures.

What to see - an overview Image produced from the Ordnance Survey Get-a-map service. The largest island of the Orkney group is known as "Mainland" and has two main towns Kirkwall and Stromness. The overall population of the islands is around 21, with the majority 17, living on Mainland Orkney according to the census data. Although with a population of only , it is over 3 times smaller than Kirkwall. Also called the Venice of the North, it has the Pier Arts Centre , tourist information, a library, marina , as well as numerous shops and a nearby golf course. Visit the Orkneyjar web site for details about the history of Stromness. Its name comes from the Old Norse word Kirkjuvagr meaning "church bay" relating to a long since disappeared church. Kirkwall has many shops and businesses including: There are also several craft and souvenir shops selling woolly jumpers, Viking jewellery and local artwork. The Orcadian Bookshop in Albert Street is excellent. The town is also home to a cinema, theatre, marina , swimming pool, sports centre and a golf course. There is an excellent public library dating from the oldest in Scotland which has Internet access. The Tourist Office here is very good. There are lots of free information leaflets and videos to watch about the history and wildlife of the islands. Outside the town is the Highland Park Distillery. Open all year, it has tours and visitor centre with a shop. The main historical sights in Kirkwall are: Tankerness House - The Orkney Museum - admission free. Since they are so interesting, I have put my historical Kirkwall information on a separate web page. It is a huge unique collection of wartime communications equipment, wireless sets, headphones, old magazines, ancient valves and lots of other displays. Take a short walk out of town to a place called Grain and visit an Iron Age souterrain or earth-house with stairs leading underground. For local news, check out The Orcadian newspaper. Otter crossing signs are located near what is called the Peerie Sea. I found one on the busy causeway which heads west and the other just around the corner next to a petrol station. Open Monday - Saturday from Easter to December. Excavations are ongoing each summer - click here to read the latest news and you can buy the official guidebook from The Ness of Brodgar Trust. Contact the Orkney Ranger service - tel: One is situated near Stonehall Farm near Finstown and is a village thought to be years old. The other can be accessed along a track leading from the Stones of Stenness to Barnhouse. Here 15 dwellings thought to be years old have been found, along with a larger possibly ceremonial structure. In April a previously unknown 4, year-old underground burial chamber, named the Crantit Tomb, was discovered in a field by a local farmer. In September another local farmer re-discovered the mysterious possibly unique underground chamber Minehowe and massive ditch which archaeologists now believe may have been at the heart of Iron Age Orkney. It is situated on private land but is open to the public May to September, 10am - 6pm contact Mr. Large parties must book in advance. There is a small admission charge. Full details and photos are available from Orkneyjar and the Orkney Archaeological Trust. On Midsummer Day , Admiral von Reuter gave the order to scupper his ships. Fifty-four out of seventy-four were sunk, but most were later salvaged and today only 7 remain on the sea bed. Invincible , the largest of all the Orkney dive boat fleet, is the best way to explore these wrecks. All charters include onboard accommodation. Take the ferry from mainland Orkney to the Lyness Interpretation Centre to learn all about it. Diving guides and courses are available from Scapa Scuba. Far from home, they requested permission to turn a couple of old Nissen huts into a Roman Catholic chapel. Walls covered in plasterboard have been painted in mock brickwork. Plain glass windows have been painted to imitate stained glass. Corned beef tins have been turned into candle-holders and stair rods into candlesticks. The ornate ironwork of the sanctuary screen was formed out of yet more scrap. The altar was sculpted from concrete and polished to resemble marble. Painted on the roof above it, a white dove symbolising the Holy Spirit looks down on a magnificent mural of the Madonna and Child. Restored several times over the years, the chapel stands as a reminder of the unfailing faith of the Italians and their ingenious use of scavenged material. It is open daily during daylight hours all year. Visit Undiscovered

Scotland for more photos of the chapel. Here you will find the Fossil and Vintage Centre with cafe which opened in Once a busy port, St. The Creel Restaurant with Rooms has good food. Her body lay in St. Magnus Cathedral before being repatriated to Norway. Located on South Ronaldsay. Adjacent to them is an RSPB hide overlooking a small loch. The name comes from the wooden bit which releases the grain between the stones: Open daily April - September. There is a joint ticket arrangement with Skara Brae. Many birds nest in the nooks and crannies of the cliffs. Up here is the Kitchener Memorial. It is a tall, square tower which was erected in memory of the men who lost their lives when HMS Hampshire struck a German mine and sank on 5th June while conveying Lord Kitchener and his staff to Russia. Be prepared for strong winds coming in off the ocean. Look carefully at the rocks for fossil "horse-tooth" Stromatolites, blue-green algae that grew in the lake that covered Orkney million years ago. In cracks in the rock you can sometimes see tiny, blue-grey snails that live in the spray zone about fifty metres above sea level and feed on lichen. On the moorland, you may see some tiny mauve flowers with yellow centres. These are rare Scottish primroses *primula scotica* found only in Orkney, Shetland and Caithness. If you look south, you might just see the outline of The Old Man of Hoy, the much-photographed sea stack off the Orkney coast. At feet m high it can be seen from the ferry before entering Stromness. Walking northwards, climb over a few barbed wire fences and cross a stream. You will come to the Brough of Bigging, a ruined tower, which overlooks the sea stack known as Yesnaby Castle. When I visited in there was a little man who baked bread over the fire and looked after the sheep. Open March to October Mon-Sat Now in ruins, it dates from the 12th century. An interpretation and orientation centre with an audio-visual presentation has now opened here which tells you all about the Norse influence as described in the Orkneyinga Saga. Found guilty of religious dissent by Charles II, they were being shipped to America to be sold as slaves, but were hit by a raging winter storm. They are worth visiting for their landscape and their history. This is just a brief introduction to some of them. Visit North Ronaldsay to have a guided tour of the lighthouse and see the Bird Observatory. Just off the coast is the Old Man of Hoy, a foot pinnacle of rock rising out of the sea. Other sights include the Dwarfie Stane, a tomb which is about years old. Just visible from Kirkwall is Balfour Castle which sits on Shapinsay. Built in it was designed by architect David Bryce. The interior owes much to a team of 30 Italian craftsmen. The castle was run as a hotel until sold in and has now been refurbished as a 5 star exclusive use venue. Visitors also come to see the seabird colonies. For more info about the island see: Booking essential picnics provided by arrangement. Coastal erosion is having a devastating effect on the archaeology at the Knowe of Swandro and cannot be stopped. In response to this threat, this charity aims to raise funds to excavate and record the Knowe of Swandro before it is destroyed. During the excavation season, usually in July, visitors are very welcome. Free site tours and special open days with re-enactors and other demonstrations. If you wish to visit, please click here for directions. A cenotaph marks the spot where Earl Magnus was murdered the cathedral in Kirkwall was built in his memory. Lots of sandy beaches, 2 golf courses and much wartime history. Visit the local web site www.orkneyislands.com.

Chapter 4 : A short guide to the Orkney Islands | United Kingdom Travel Guides

Orkney Diversity. Where the dramatic coastline of northern Scotland ends, here the ocean begins. And embedded just offshore - like green jewels on a storm-tossed sea of blue - lie the bountiful islands of Orkney.

This article contains affiliate Links info on the Disclosure page. If you purchase using my link, I get a commission at no extra cost to you. The ferry to Orkney from Scrabster near Thurso on the North Coast of mainland Scotland - it takes 2 hours to reach Stromness on the South West coast of Mainland Orkney - Learn more on my article about the Ferry to Orkney or Check out prices and options The other way of getting to Orkney is by plane. Once in Orkney, better to have your own car to discover all the things to do in Orkney on mainland and in the neighboring islands. Below is a simple Orkney Islands Map to give you an idea of the locations of the isles compared to mainland Orkney. Just to get you oriented. The top locations on Mainland Orkney, along with many other beautiful places, are included in my eBook: The Road Trip Guide - Scotland. It is a practical tool to plan your trip with practical maps, photos, planning tips, GPS coordinates Below is an overview of the things to do in the Orkney on this island: Yesnaby Cliffs Located on the West coast, the Yesnaby cliffs is a walk along tortuous and eroded cliffs. One of the highlights is the Sea Stack called the Yesnaby Castle. The walk is easy. Bring your binoculars to admire the many birds nesting in the vertical cliffs. Discover more pictures and practical information to plan your visit on the Yesnaby Castle and Cliffs article. Skara Brae Skara Brae was discovered under a sand dune after a windstorm in It is a settlement that was built and used years ago. With a great state of preservation, it gives a good idea of life during the Neolithic. Learn more about the tidal island and its access on the article dedicated to the Brough of Birsay. If you want to relax for a while at the beach The ruins are well preserved. There is also a small museum and great explanation. Because of the combination of history and beautiful landscape, this site was one of my favorite things to do in Orkney Scotland. Discover in photos and video this amazing site on my article dedicated to the Broch of Gurness. It was built by Patrick Stewart, the Earl of Orkney who wanted to create a magnificent complex. He was actually known to be ambitious, arrogant and irresponsible. It was built in the mid 1800s at the same time as the St Magnus Cathedral. The cathedral was built in the mid 1800s and expanded twice. It is made of beautiful Yellow and Red sandstones. Maeshowe Chambered Cairn Maeshowe is considered one of the best-preserved chambered cairns. It survived from years ago, enabling us to discover its prehistoric design. It is one of the most recommended sites, one of the top things to do in Orkney Scotland. Video, photos and practical information on my article about the Standing Stones of Stenness. It is part of a central area designated a Unesco World Heritage site which also includes the Standing Stones of Stenness. Video, Photos and practical information on my article about the Ring of Brodgar. It is mostly low grassy farmland mostly enjoyed by birdwatchers and people interested in World War II. Things to do include: Loch of Tankerness, a great destination for bird watching Mill Sands: Great for birdwatching Dingieshowe Beach: I stayed in a small guesthouse in Stromness to be close to the ferry. You can see my review on my Scotland Accommodations Article. Things to do in Orkney - Connecting Orkney Islands 2 islands are connected by bridges: Burray First is the small island of Burray.

Chapter 5 : Orkney - Wikipedia

Guide to the Orkney Islands #30DaysOfScotland, Beaches, Coastal, Days out Just off the North Coast of Scotland, an archipelago of over 70 islands creates a spectacular array of outlines set against clear blue Scottish waters.

Keep reading for Orkney travel tips on what to do, where to go, and how to do it all cheaply! My Scottish husband and I travelled up to the Orkney islands north of Scotland for our honeymoon. The islands are filled with history and legends. The village laid undiscovered for thousands of years until a bad storm in the winter of shifted the sand dunes along the coast to reveal eight stone houses. Outside the village itself the museum has built a replica of the quite amazing stone houses so visitors can get a feel for what it is like stepping inside an actual neolithic house. As with Stonehenge and similar monuments the experts are still debating why it was built and what it was used for. Visiting the Ring of Brodgar is a totally different experience to visiting Stonehenge. Not only can you walk up to the stones and trace your fingers along the graffiti that has been carved into the rocks over the centuries. At some point in the 12th century vikings broke into Maeshowe, perhaps sheltering from bad weather, and the walls inside the tomb are littered with runes. There are 70 different islands to choose between only 20 if you just count the inhabited ones. You can see how this was a good way to start your day back in the day before heading out to sea or working on a small croft. A good Scottish breakfast is heavy on the meat and consists of tattie scones potato scones , lorne sausage or square sausage, basically a huge slice of sausage that looks like a square , black pudding, beans and a fried egg. Whisky Which is more a must drink than must eat, I guess. There are two whisky distilleries on Orkney, Highland Park and Scapa. Both offer tours around the distillery where you can see how grain is turned into spirit and then stored for many decades. Orkney whisky is quite soft and salty the sea air supposedly penetrates the casks where the whisky is stored and mingles with the spirit. Everyone is very friendly and welcoming to visitors. There is a huge craft movement on Orkney and plenty of small art studios on the mainland. If you want to fly from London it can cost as much as a return ticket from London to New York. Accommodation There are plenty of self-catering cottages on Orkney, which can actually turn out to be a cheaper option than staying in hotels and hostels. Especially if you cook a lot of your own food. Eating out on Orkney will be expensive as there is a limited number of restaurants. Of course, Airbnb is usually cheaper than a hotel and a lot more authentic. A cheaper option would be to bring your own bike. Just remember that the Scottish weather can be a little bit unforgiving, so bring some sturdy rain-gear if you plan on cycling around the islands. Thanks so much for sharing, Charlotta! Any travel tips to share? Now check your email to confirm your subscription. There was an error submitting your subscription. First Name Email Address We use this field to detect spam bots. If you fill this in, you will be marked as a spammer.

Chapter 6 : Orkney Islands Best of Orkney Islands Tourism - TripAdvisor

A short guide to the Orkney Islands Skara Brae Among all the numerous small islands that are part of the United Kingdom, the Orkney Islands are some of the most remote, and also the most mysterious.

Prehistoric Orkney A charred hazelnut shell, recovered in during excavations in Tankerness on the Mainland has been dated to 6000 BC indicating the presence of Mesolithic nomadic tribes. Many of the Neolithic settlements were abandoned around BC, possibly due to changes in the climate. The nature and origin of these buildings is a subject of ongoing debate. Other structures from this period include underground storehouses , and aisled roundhouses , the latter usually in association with earlier broch sites. The nature of this transition is controversial, and theories range from peaceful integration to enslavement and genocide. Both Orkney and Shetland saw a significant influx of Norwegian settlers during the late 8th and early 9th centuries. Vikings made the islands the headquarters of their pirate expeditions carried out against Norway and the coasts of mainland Scotland. It is clear that this story, which appears in the Orkneyinga Saga, is based on the later voyages of Magnus Barelegs and some scholars believe it to be apocryphal. Initially a pagan culture, detailed information about the turn to the Christian religion to the islands of Scotland during the Norse-era is elusive. The King summoned the jarl Sigurd the Stout [Notes 7] and said, "I order you and all your subjects to be baptised. Thorfinn died around and his sons Paul and Erlend succeeded him, fighting at the Battle of Stamford Bridge in The martyrdom of Magnus Erlendsson , who was killed in April by his cousin Haakon Paulsson , resulted in the building of St. Magnus Cathedral , still today a dominating feature of Kirkwall. However the money was never paid, and Orkney was annexed by the Kingdom of Scotland in From now on the ordinary people emerge with greater clarity. An influx of Scottish entrepreneurs helped to create a diverse and independent community that included farmers, fishermen and merchants that called themselves comunitas Orcadie and who proved themselves increasingly able to defend their rights against their feudal overlords. There is little evidence of an Orcadian fleet until the 19th century but it grew rapidly and boats were involved by the s with Stronsay and later Stromness becoming leading centres of development. White fish never became as dominant as in other Scottish ports. The harsh climate of Orkney and the Orcadian reputation for sobriety and their boat handling skills made them ideal candidates for the rigours of the Canadian north. At the end of the rebellion, a large number of Jacobites who had fled north from mainland Scotland sought refuge on Orkney and were helped on to safety in Sweden. Orkney was the last place in the British Isles that held out for the Jacobites and was not retaken by the British Government until 24 May , over a month after the defeat of the main Jacobite army at Culloden. After the Armistice in , the German High Seas Fleet was transferred in its entirety to Scapa Flow to await a decision on its future. The German sailors opened the sea-cocks and scuttled all the ships. Most ships were salvaged, but the remaining wrecks are now a favoured haunt of recreational divers. As a result, barriers were built to close most of the access channels; these had the additional advantage of creating causeways enabling travellers to go from island to island by road instead of being obliged to rely on ferries. The causeways were constructed by Italian prisoners of war, who also constructed the ornate Italian Chapel. The problem of a declining population was significant in the post-war years, though in the last decades of the 20th century there was a recovery and life in Orkney focused on growing prosperity and the emergence of a relatively classless society. Declines were particularly significant in the outlying islands, some of which remain vulnerable to ongoing losses. Although Orkney is in many ways very distinct from the other islands and archipelagos of Scotland these trends are very similar to those experienced elsewhere.

Chapter 7 : | Travel + Leisure

There's a magic to Orkney that you begin to feel as soon as the Scottish mainland slips astern. Only a few short miles of ocean separate the chain of islands from Scotland's north coast, but the Pentland Firth is one of Europe's most dangerous waterways, a graveyard of ships that adds an extra mystique to these islands shimmering in the sea mists.

Fantastic places to Camp and Caravan in Orkney The Orkney Islands are a brilliant place to explore, and taking a caravan, motorhome or tent is a brilliant way to see the best of the islands. The site has a huge amount of Neolithic art, a massive enclosing stone wall, houses, and a large building of great significance. The Junior Inter-County competition between Orkney and Shetland The two archipelagos of Orkney and Shetland, it would seem, are naturally drawn to one another in terms of friendships and rivalries. Nowhere is this more evident than in the annual Junior Inter-county sports competition! Read on to find out more about the yearly competition, how it was set up, and how this amazing sporting performance has changed over the years. Ian kindly offered some tips about Brown Trout and Sea Trout fishing in Orkney, including favourite lochs and best techniques to catch fish. We hope these tips help those visitors coming to the isles in search of a Trout! There are wide sandy beaches, amazing cliffs, hills with stunning views and lovely moorland walks dotted with wild flowers. Here are some great walks for you and your dog in Orkney! The Essence of Orkney If we were asked to explain to someone who had never been before what makes Orkney so special it would be hard to name just one thing! There are many different facets that make up the essence of Orkney. Birdwatching in Orkney – an interview with Alan Leitch When imagining birdwatching, one pictures folk hiding in long grass, peering through powerful binoculars. However, the truth is very different in Orkney. Short eared owls fly along roadside verges as commuters travel to work, and long tailed ducks are found in the Peedie Sea in Kirkwall! Photographing Orkney – an interview with Premysl Fojtu Premysl Fojtu is a photographer from the Czech republic who has brought a fresh eye to Orkney photography. He has recently embarked on an ambitious project to photograph a different Orkney island each month. Premysl very kindly agreed to answer our questions about his photography and also offers tips to help you take photographs of the beautiful Orkney Islands! We were delighted when he agreed to answer our questions about the game! The sea stack is the tallest in Britain and stands 40m taller than Big Ben! In geological terms The Old Man of Hoy is relatively juvenile - having stood as a sea stack for less than years - find out how it was created here! We were delighted when he agreed to answer some questions about his work, the sealcam and about how to spot seals in Orkney! All about the Dwarfie Stane The Dwarfie Stane lies in one of the most desolate and beautiful places in the Orkney islands. It is a giant block of sandstone dropped by the glaciers that cut the valley in Hoy; an amazing structure surrounded by folklore! Read on to find out more about this amazing tomb that was carved out of rock using the most primitive tools! The mystery of the Birsay whalebone One of the best coastal walks in Orkney is to the whalebone at Skiba Geo. This mysterious sculpture was created from a jaw and skull bones of a whale. We investigated who put it there, when they did it and why? The story is a fascinating one - read on to find out more! The day we caught an Orkney Vole Orkney Voles are twice the size of field voles found on mainland Britain. They have a stocky body with a blunt, rounded snout and they feed on the leaves, stems and roots of plants in the rough grassland of Orkney. We succeeded, but in the most unexpected way! Many of the batteries, searchlights and gun emplacements remain - read on to find out more about the relics of war left scattered through the islands! Read on to find out more about how the Italians created this beautiful building in their spare time, using only scrap metal and concrete! You can get a superb view of both when travelling MV Hamnavoe. Did you know these fascinating facts about these amazing landmarks? The most popular pudding on our ships - easy to make but hard to keep around for very long! Share this page Print this Page Booking directly with NorthLink Ferries is cheaper than booking with another website and we never charge for any amendments made to your booking!

Chapter 8 : THE 15 BEST Things to Do in Orkney Islands - (with Photos) - TripAdvisor

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Chapter 9 : Orkney islands destination guide | VisitBritain

The Orkney Islands are a brilliant place to explore, and taking a caravan, motorhome or tent is a brilliant way to see the best of the islands. We've written a handy guide, which we hope will help you, to the many great caravan, motorhome and camping sites in Orkney!