

The Churchill Barriers

Kirkwall, Orkney

Britain’s Most Popular Cruise Ship Destination

Orkney Harbours

At 59 degrees north, and embracing British, Scottish, Orcadian and Viking Heritage and Culture, The Orkney Islands are a must see destination on any Around Britain, Scandinavian or Northern European cruise.

The diversity of itineraries encompassing 5000 years of history, relics of two World Wars, Britain’s most northerly Cathedral, distilleries and a globally renowned Word Heritage Site all contribute to a wealth of choice in deciding how to spend your time in Orkney.

Scotland's longest deep water, commercial berth can accommodate some of the world's largest cruise liners, and there is additional capacity for other berthing and anchorage locations in Kirkwall, Stromness and on some of our isles.

Cruise ship visitors are given a Welcome Brochure and street map with all the main tourism points of interest highlighted in six languages, and a complimentary shuttle bus service transports passengers from the main terminal at Hatston Pier into Kirkwall. It is worth noting that despite the progressive vibrancy and bustling commercial activity of this island group, there are no trains, dual carriageways, shopping malls or traffic lights in Orkney which makes the visit experience unique.

Top Five Facts About Orkney

1. Kirkwall is the United Kingdom's most popular cruise transit call destination.
2. Home to St Magnus Cathedral, the most Northerly Cathedral in the United Kingdom.
3. Skara Brae, Maeshowe, Ring of Brodgar and the Standing Stones of Stenness are the four main monuments that make up the UNESCO Heart of Neolithic Orkney World Heritage Site and date back over 5000 years.
4. Orkney's most popular visitor attraction is the Italian Chapel, built by Italian prisoners of war.
5. Orkney has the world's shortest scheduled flight 1.7 miles, two-minute flight between Westray and Papa Westray.

Experience Kirkwall, Orkney

The Italian Chapel

This lovely chapel is known as the Italian Chapel because it was built by Italian prisoners of war during World War Two. Five hundred men were housed at Camp 60 on Lambholm, having been sent to Orkney to help build the Churchill Barriers. The men had very little to work with when creating the Chapel, other than two old nissen huts, unwanted scrap and some concrete. It is quite astounding what they created - a truly unique and wonderful place, which is an unforgettable inspiration to all those who visit it. The Italian Chapel is open to the public all year round, and is one of Orkney's most visited sites.
Link: https://www.orkney.com/life/businesses/listing/the-italian-chapel

St Magnus Cathedral, Kirkwall

St Magnus Cathedral known as the 'Light in the North' was founded in 1137 by the Viking, Earl Rognvald, in honour of his uncle St Magnus. The Cathedral belongs to the people of Orkney and its doors are open to all. The Cathedral, set in the heart of Kirkwall, the capital city of the Orkney Islands, is a place of stillness, of inspiration, of warmth, and is steeped in the presence of God.
Link: http://www.stmagnus.org

The Ring of Brodgar

If one iconic site has come to represent Orkney's ancient heritage, it must surely be the Ring of Brodgar. Part of the Heart of Neolithic Orkney World Heritage Site, the Ring of Brodgar is found in the West Mainland parish of Stenness. It stands on an eastward-sloping plateau on the Ness of Brodgar - a thin strip of land separating the Harray and Stenness lochs. Because the interior of the Ring of Brodgar has never been fully excavated, or scientifically dated, the monument's actual age remains uncertain. However, it is generally assumed to have been erected between 2500 BC and 2000 BC, and was, therefore, the last of the great Neolithic monuments built on the Ness.
Link: https://www.orkney.com/life/businesses/listing/ring-of-brodgar

Skara Brae

The Neolithic settlement of Skara Brae lies near the dramatic white beach of the Bay of Skaill. Skara Brae is the best-preserved group of prehistoric houses in western Europe. Uncovered by a storm in 1850, the site presents a remarkable picture of life around 5,000 years ago. Visitors can experience a vivid impression of the realities of a prehistoric village and see ancient homes fitted with stone bed enclosures, dressers and seats. A replica construction allows visitors to fully understand the interior of a prehistoric house. An informative visitor centre provides touch-screen presentations, fact-finding quizzes for children and adults, and an opportunity to see artefacts discovered during archaeological excavations in the 1970s. There is a cafe (which may have restricted opening hours in the winter) and a well-stocked gift shop selling locally-made souvenirs and crafts. Skara Brae is part of the Heart of Neolithic Orkney World Heritage Site.
Link: https://www.historicenvironment.scot/visit-a-place/places/skara-brae/

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On 14 October 1939, the Royal Navy battleship HMS Royal Oak was sunk at her moorings within the natural harbour of Scapa Flow in a nighttime attack by the German U-boat U-47 under the command of Günther Prien. Shortly before midnight on the 13 October the U-47 had entered Scapa Flow through Kirk Sound between Lamb Holm and the Orkney Mainland. Although the shallow eastern passages had been secured with measures including sunken block ships, booms and anti-submarine nets, Prien was able to navigate the U-47 around the obstructions at high tide. He then launched a surprise torpedo attack on the unsuspecting Royal Navy battleship while it was at anchor in Scapa Flow. The U-47 then escaped seaward using the same channel by navigating between the block ships. In response, First Lord of the Admiralty Winston Churchill ordered the construction of several permanent barriers to prevent any further attacks. Work began in May 1940 and was completed by September 1944. However the barriers were not officially opened until 12 May 1945, four days after the end of World War II in Europe.
Link: https://www.orkney.com/life/businesses/listing/churchill-barriers

Highland Park Distillery, Kirkwall

The distillery was founded in 1798. The name of this whisky does not refer to the area of Scotland known as The Highlands, but rather to the fact that the distillery was founded on an area called 'High Park' distinguished from a lower area nearby. Highland Park is one of the few distilleries to malt its own barley, using locally cut peat from Hobbister Moor. The peat is then mixed with heather before being used as fuel. The malt is peated to a level of 20 parts per million phenol and then mixed with unpeated malt produced on the Scottish mainland. In 1984, Highland Park was the only whisky ever to have scored a rating of 100% by the regular tasting team of The Scotsman, a national newspaper of Scotland. Whisky reviewer and expert Michael Jackson has called it "The greatest all-rounder in the world of malt whisky
Link: http://highlandpark.co.uk

Stromness

Orkney's second largest town is lively, welcoming and cosmopolitan. It remains a working town and is at the forefront of Orkney's pioneering renewable energy industry. On any day, a heady mix of locals, visitors, students, artists and festival goers fills its streets, some with a clear purpose while others are simply content to soak up the atmosphere. The best of the islands' crafts, textiles and jewellery can be found in the delightful independent shops to be discovered around every corner, while in local galleries and the 5-Star Pier Arts Centre the work of artists and sculptors from Orkney and beyond takes centre stage. And as you take in all that Stromness has to offer, the experience is often accompanied by the vibrant sounds of Orcadian music - rehearsed and impromptu - to be heard in the many pubs and venues across the town.
Link: http://www.stromnessorkney.com

Scapa Flow Musuem

Situated in a historic wartime building on the Island of Hoy, Orkney, the Scapa Flow Museum offers a fascinating insight into the area’s pivotal role in both World Wars. Once a key naval base, Scapa Flow was

the site of dramatic wartime events, including the scuttling of the German fleet in 1919. The museum showcases artefacts, photographs, and interactive displays, bringing its rich maritime history and the stories of the thousands of people who lived, served, or visited Scapa Flow to life. A finalist for Museum of the Year 2023, Scapa Flow Museum isn't to be missed.
Link: https://www.orkneymuseums.co.uk/our-museums/scapa-flow-museum/

Port Info

Time Zone : GMT
Operational Hours : 24/7/365
Latitude & Longitude : Hatston Pier. Kirkwall. Lat. 59° 00′ 01″ N, Long. 002° 58′ 29″ W.
Prevailing Weather : variable according to season
Berth Information : Hatston Pier 385 metres LOA 10.5 metres draft
Vessel Length : Over 385 metres. risk assessment required
Vessel Width : Unrestricted
Air Draft Restrictions : Unrestricted
Vessel Draft : 10.5 metres
Depth on Berth : 10.5 meters at chart datum
Largest ship to call : MSC Meraviglia
VTS - Channel : VHF Channel 11
Max Ship Dimension : Draft restricted berthing at 10.5 metres
Pilotage : Compulsory for passenger vessels over 65 metres
Tugboat : 3 x 55 tonne bollard pull ASD tugs available (pre booking required)
Security Facilities : Full ISPS accredited port
Gangway : 10 metre and 15 metre gangways available with PRM facilities
Fresh Water : Available at 50 tonnes per hour flow rate
Power Supply : 120 amps
Fuel Supply : MGO bunkers available subject to pre notification
Hot works / painting/ lifeboats : Permits required in advance via the Harbour Authority
Waste Handling : All waste handled apart from liquid waste and grey water waste

Facilities

Cruise Terminal Building : Reception building at Hatston terminal
Currency Exchange : Local post office
Internet Access : Available free of charge at the cruise terminal and throughout Kirkwall.
Telephones : Public telephones available in Kirkwall.
Mailbox : Mailboxes and Icoa post office close to the main visitors arrival point.
Taxi Rank : Several in the centre of Kirkwall.
Distance to Railway Station : n/a
Distance to Airport : 5 miles/8km
Banks / ATM Machines : In the centre of Kirkwall
Restaurant/Café : In the centre of Kirkwall

Contacts & Info

Port Contacts
Email : Cruise Orkney
Website : www.cruise-orkney.com www.orkneyharbours.com

Address : Marine Services Harbour Authority Building, Scapa, Orkney, Scotland KW15 1SD
Visitor Information
Websites : www.cruise-orkney.com www.orkney.com www.kirkwallbid.co.uk