

# Best of the Fife Coast

**Trip style:**

**Destination:** 📍 Scotland

**Trip code:** XFC06-LDW11

**Grades:** 1, 2, 3



## HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

Linking the Forth and Tay estuaries, the 116-mile-long Fife Coastal Path takes you through picturesque former fishing villages, wildlife-rich nature reserves, and St Andrew's – the medieval town considered by many to be the home of golf. There's no shortage of historic thrills along the way, including former coalyards, ruined castles, and Pictish carvings in the Wemyss Caves. You'll also get to climb the western peak of the Lomond Hills for far-reaching views made even more incredible when the sky is clear and the sun shining.

## WHAT YOU'LL LOVE

- Discovering the rich history of Scotland's east coast
- Exploring charming and characterful fishing villages
- Spending town in the beautiful town of St Andrew's
- Taking a relaxing stroll on the golden Cambo Sands
- Soaking up incredible North Sea views
- Staying at the Old Manor Hotel in Lundin Links

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Comfortable en-suite rooms in our partner accommodation(s)
- Cooked or continental breakfast every morning
- Daily packed lunches
- Three-course evening meals, plus tea & coffee
- Guided walks with an experienced HF Holidays Leader
- All transport to and from walks where necessary

## TRIP SUITABILITY

This Guided Walking/Hiking Trail is graded 3, which means walks/hikes are on well-defined trails in upland areas, and along coastal footpaths which can be rough and steep in places. The trail requires a reasonable level of fitness as you will be walking every day, and it's your responsibility to ensure you have the relevant fitness and equipment required to enjoy the holiday. Provision cannot always be made for anyone who opts out. Please be sure you can manage the mileage and ascent detailed in the daily itineraries. Each walking day is normally 6 to 7 hours, walks are not always on paths and there is some rough terrain. It is important for your own enjoyment, and that of your fellow guests that you can maintain the pace.

It makes a lot of sense to spend time getting some additional exercise before your holiday. We suggest that you try to fit in a number of longer walks, including some on hilly terrain. Other exercises such as cycling, jogging and swimming are also excellent for developing increased stamina.

### Your fitness

Having a solid base of fitness before your holiday will ensure you've the best chance of completing the holiday and enjoying it to boot. Here's a few simple tips to help you get fit and ready for your challenge:

- Get out walking - whether the weather, get out there, and start building your fitness months before your holiday
- Build your distance gradually and get a number of 6-8hr hill days in
- Ideally, try and do two consecutive days training if possible
- Take the stairs every time
- Train on different terrain

- Train with your day pack and your walking boots too, to ensure they're well worn in before your holiday
- Other sports help improve your walking fitness too. The best ones are jogging, cycling, swimming, which will build your stamina, and yoga which will help strengthen your core and improve balance
- Time training will help ensure you enjoy your holiday to the max.

## ITINERARY

### **Day 1:** Arrival Day

Check-in at The Old Manor Hotel is available from 15:00 hours. Your leader will be at reception at 18:30 to meet the group and for a quick introduction to the holiday before dinner.

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### **Day 2:** Dalgety Bay to Kinghorn

We walk from Dalgety Bay, within sight of the famous Forth Railway Bridge which takes the main line across to Edinburgh. On our way we pass the ruins of St. Bridget's Kirk, and then reach Aberdour, an attractive village with a castle dating back to the 12th century. We walk round the pretty Silver Sands Bay and climb onto the Binn, a striking hill overlooking the town of Burntisland, with panoramic views up and down the Firth of Forth. From here we drop down, past the peaceful Kinghorn Loch, renowned for its bird-life, to reach the old port of Kinghorn. 11 miles (18 km) with 1,250 feet (225m) of ascent.

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### **Day 3:** Ravenscraig to St Monan's

In the morning we walk from Ravenscraig Park, on the outskirts of Kirkcaldy, past the historic harbour at Dysart as far as East Wemyss. Dysart's history goes back to the beginning of Christianity in Scotland, and it has also been a busy commercial port. Coal was also mined here, for Fife had more working pits than anywhere else in Scotland. At lunchtime we travel from East Wemyss to Shell Bay, and then continue our walk over Kinncraig Head, where there are old defences from the Second World War, to reach the twin resorts of Earlsferry and Elie. Our route then passes the Lady Tower, an 18th century summerhouse, built for Lady Anstruther who used to come and bathe here, and ends at St. Monan's, a small fishing village with narrow streets, a stone-built harbour and an impressive cliff-top church. 11 miles (18km) with 850 feet (260m) of ascent.

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### **Day 4:** The Lomond Hills

Today we head inland to explore the Lomond Hills and climb the Western peak. There are fine views all round, north to the River Tay, west to the Ochil Hills, south to the Forth, and east to the North Sea. Our walk ends by descending pretty Maspie Glen, with its succession of waterfalls, to historic Falkland with its 16th century royal palace, a favourite retreat of King James V and his daughter, Mary Queen of Scots. Here there may just be time to visit Falkland Palace - National Trust Scotland ( cost £12.50 /£9 concessions - 2019; free to National Trust members). 10 miles (16km) with 1,050 feet (325m) of ascent and 1,900 feet (590m) of descent.

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### **Day 5:** St Monan's to Fife Ness

We rejoin the coastal path at St. Monan's, and pass a restored windmill and see remains of the salt pans which once occupied the shore, when salt was worth more than gold and exported to the continent. We then make our way eastwards to Pittenweem, still a working fishing village. The white houses here, with their red-tiled roofs, illustrate the classic East Neuk style of building, influenced by centuries of trade with Flanders and the Netherlands. Our next stop is Anstruther, a busy seaside resort, where there'll be a chance to visit the impressive Scottish Fisheries Museum (cost £9/£7 concessions). Crail comes next, a smaller, traditional village with a 17th century harbour, full of charm and character. From here the path heads through Kilminning Wildlife Reserve to Fife Ness, the most easterly point of the

Kingdom. 10½ miles (16.5km) with 600 feet (180m) of ascent.

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**Day 6:** Cambo to St Andrews

Our final day's walking begins in the impressive grounds of Cambo House, as we follow a wooded glen down to re-join the coastal path. We are now facing the North Sea, and our route becomes more remote and rugged, though never far from a series of cliff-top golf-courses. We will see plenty of sea-birds, and pass striking geological features like the Rock and Spindle, as we head to the historic town of St. Andrews. Here there will be a little time to view its historic buildings: the castle, the ruined cathedral, the University colleges, and the iconic Royal and Ancient golf-course. 9 miles (14.5m) with 530 feet (160m) of ascent.

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**Day 7:** Departure Day

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## **The Old Manor Hotel, Lundin Links - Best of Fife Coast**

This is a centre-based holiday located in the village of Lundin Links, where you'll stay at the family owned Old Manor Hotel, in one of the most scenic parts of this glorious corner of Scotland. The hotel is at the gateway to Fife's East Neuk, an attractive area of picturesque fishing villages and countryside. It has 23 ensuite rooms, beautiful sea-view dining, and comfortable lounges; Lundin Links' fine beach is only ten minutes' walk away. Rooms have tea and coffee making facilities, hairdryer, TV and radio and free WiFi. Limited drying facilities are available. Check in at the hotel is available from 3pm and you will meet your trail leader prior to your evening meal. This hotel is dog-friendly so you may meet four legged friends in some of the communal areas.