

7 Night Isle of Wight Discovery Tour

Trip style:

Destination: 📍 Isle of Wight

Trip code: FWHCR-7

Carbon Footprint: 🌿 160kg CO2



HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

A 7-night Isle of Wight Discovery Tour lines up a selection of the island's highlights. Journey along the southwest coast for views of the postcard-worthy Needles and admire exotic plants from around the world at Ventnor Botanic Gardens. You'll visit charming English villages and spend time at ancient Carisbrooke Castle and Osborne House – Queen Victoria's favourite summer residence. And to top it all, there's a ride aboard the Isle of Wight Steam Railway.

WHAT YOU'LL LOVE

- Riding the Isle of Wight Steam Railway
- Visiting Osborne House, the favourite holiday haunt of Queen Victoria
- Discovering the history of Carisbrooke Castle
- Exploring Ventnor Botanic Gardens
- Admiring the famous Needles
- Staying in our seafront country house on Freshwater Bay

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Ride on the Isle of Wight Steam Railway
- Comfortable en-suite accommodation in our country house
- Cream tea on arrival day
- Cooked or continental breakfast every morning
- Daily packed lunches
- Three-course evening meals, plus tea & coffee
- Guided sightseeing with an experienced HF Holidays Leader
- All transport to and from sites of interest
- Easy-to-follow routes, maps, and information in our Discovery Point if you want to explore independently

Please note - Entrance fees are not included. See Essential Info tab for details.

TRIP SUITABILITY

Trip suitability

Our Discovery holidays give you the opportunity to immerse yourself in the culture of the local area through **active sightseeing**.

On each Discovery day, you will be walking throughout the course of the day as you explore the venues and locations we visit. You'll also be hopping on and off the coach throughout - you should expect to spend the majority of the day on your feet. Most of this walking will be at attractions but some may be across country tracks or footpaths so be sure to **bring sturdy shoes**. There will also be stairs to climb in the majority of the venues you visit, though other more accessible options may be available. At some venues, there may also be uneven surfaces, such as cobbles or rocky paths.

ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrival Day

Check-in at the hotel is available from 16:00. If you are a member you can arrive at the house from 14:00. Enjoy a complimentary cream tea at 16:30 and meet other guests.

Day 2: Along the South West Coast

We begin with a visit to Alum Bay, with its coloured sands and iconic views of the Needles, before enjoying a scenic drive along the island's Military Road. Running parallel with the island's southern coast from Freshwater to Chale, it offers unbeatable views of the spectacular coastal scenery. Making a turn inland, the road takes us to Shanklin where we'll explore the old village and you may choose to walk down through Shanklin Chine, the stunning tree lined gorge that leads to the esplanade below. We end the day at Ventnor with a chance to visit its sub-tropical Botanic Gardens which are split out into zones of the world, so you can travel from New Zealand to the Mediterranean to Japan in a few paces!

Day 3: Ryde & Carisbrooke Castle

Discover the seaside town of Ryde today, with its elegant Victorian and Georgian architecture. Stroll along the seafront enjoying the sandy beaches, or perhaps wander around town taking in the eclectic mix of shops. We spend the afternoon visiting Carisbrooke Castle, located in the centre of the island. Learn about its history and relax in the stunning Edwardian-style Princess Beatrice Garden. There's time to climb the ramparts and meet the donkeys in the pumphouse who help pump water up from the well.

Day 4: Free Day - Isle of Wight

Discover more about Freshwater Bay House and the local area for ideas on how to make the most of your free day.

Day 5: North East Wight

Spend time learning about the fascinating history of modern Quarr Abbey before heading to Ryde, for the opportunity to travel on both the Island Line and the Isle of Wight Steam Railway. We then take the scenic route to Bembridge to visit its lifeboat station, before rounding off the afternoon with the option of visiting the fascinating Brading Roman Villa or Sandown and Dinosaur Isle. Please note, due to coach access restrictions, if you wish to visit the Villa, there is a 500m uphill walk to the Villa, and 500m walk back downhill to our coach. Alternatively, our coach can take you to explore Sandown with the option of visiting Dinosaur Isle.

Day 6: Isle of Wight Villages & Gardens

Be charmed by the pretty village of Brighstone, before exploring the peaceful gardens at Mottistone which surround an Elizabethan manor. Located in a sheltered valley, these enchanting gardens enjoy their own micro-climate, meaning the flowering season of familiar favourites is extended and plants usually associated with the Mediterranean region thrive. In the afternoon, it's time to head for the popular village of Godshill with its delightful medieval church, charming thatched cottages and a winding main street lined with traditional tearooms and craft

shops, as well as the nostalgic Model Village.

Day 7: Cowes & Osborne House

Today's focus is on the island's royal connections. We first head to Cowes, home to the oldest and biggest sailing regatta in the world and the Royal Yacht Squadron based at the Castle. There'll be time to stroll along the Parade to Egypt Point, where Queen Victoria herself enjoyed panoramic views of the Solent. Or you may wish to explore the historic town with its independent shops and maritime connections. The afternoon is spent at the island's premier visitor attraction – Osborne House – Queen Victoria's family home. Enjoy its opulent interiors, such as the Indian-style Durbar Room, and extensive grounds including walled gardens and its own private beach.

Day 8: Departure Day

Enjoy a leisurely breakfast before making your way home.

Freshwater Bay House

Chalky white cliffs and eyebrow-arching sea views set the tone for the delights that follow at this county house on the Isle of Wight - Queen Victoria's favourite island that's just a ferry hop from the South Coast. The location is as gorgeous as it gets; to the south of the village of Freshwater, within pebble-throwing distance of its namesake bay, and just a skip from Tennyson Down. You'll also be within easy reach of the area's showstoppers, including the imposing Stag and Mermaid rocks, the multi-coloured sands of Alum Bay, the remarkable Ventnor Botanic Gardens, and the 125-million-year-old dinosaur footprints at Compton Bay. And then, of course, there's the Needles Old Battery for the ubiquitous photo opportunity and the best views of The Needles.

A warm welcome

We want you to feel comfortable from the moment you arrive. You'll find a welcome pack in your room with guest registration forms, menus, order forms for dinners and picnic lunches, the Wi-Fi password, and the front door code. Our houses are locked at night, so we recommend noting the Duty Manager's number on arrival in case of an emergency (or getting locked out).

Evening entertainment

While evening entertainment varies from house to house, HF Holidays Inter-House Quiz night held after dinner on Wednesdays is a weekly staple. Your HF Holidays leader may be around for tips on guided and self-guided walking routes as well as visit-worthy local attractions.

Walks talks

Our HF Holidays walk leaders host guided walking information briefings before dinner on guided walking holiday arrival days. This is followed by a group Walks Talk for information on the following day's guided walks (held before dinner every evening). Self-guided walking guests are, of course, welcome.

The walking day

Prior to setting off on guided walks, your HF Holidays Leader will run you through a short safety briefing. There's also an up-to-date weather forecast on display at the house to ensure you have appropriate clothing and footwear. If you choose to do your own walks or are on a self-guided walking holiday, we ask that you please complete an Independent Walker Card each day. These can be found near the Discovery Point in the house.