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18 days
Duration

Channel Islands
Destination

Level 3 - Moderate to Challenging
Activity

Channel Islands | A small group walking tour for seniors

May 20 2024 to Jun 06 2024



Channel Islands Small Group Tour: Walking Jersey, Guernsey, Alderney, Sark & Herm

This fully escorted, small group walking tour of the Channel Islands, takes the active senior on a walking holiday of discovery through the fascinating small Channel Islands of Jersey, Guernsey, Alderney, Sark and Herm. This tour gives you the chance to walk the islands while

learning about the history, unique culture, landscapes and wildlife of these destinations.

The walks suit a range of abilities

Our guided walks have been organised so that they suit a number of different abilities. Although, on average, the group will be hiking for about 10km per day, it will be possible for participants to skip segments of the walks if they so desire.

On this small group tour to the Channel Islands, there will be a variety of activities included to supplement the walks ensuring a memorable holiday. The five islands that we visit have both a long and interesting history and beautiful coastal scenery. The Channel Islands teem with bird life, particularly on the smaller islands, with puffins in abundance on the sea cliffs during the breeding season as we walk along sections of the Jersey coastal path. Cumulatively this walking tour of the Channel islands provides breathtaking views of stunning medieval castles, military fortifications, stately homes, gardens with unique torrey pines and museums. There is even a well preserved Roman Fort! The pristine coastline with its sheltered coves reveals a national park and marine sanctuary of oyster beds, kelp forests and sea lions and to see dolphins as well as whale watching on occasion.

About Jersey, Guernsey, Alderney, Sark & Herm

The Channel Islands are not part of the United Kingdom but are British Crown Dependencies with their own distinctive culture and history. They are situated only a few kilometres from the French coast, but were controlled from Britain for many years. As a result, the islands provide a delightful mix of English and French culture.







Jersey

With its charming historic center at St Helier, is a most well known by its historical exports which share its name, the close-fitted and machine knitted garment, mostly associated with football jerseys; and the jersey cow, bred on the island and renowned for its ultra-creamy milk. Though Jersey cows can now be found around the world, the best products are still found fresh on the island.

The island of Jersey has its own unique local dialect known as Jèrriais, a distinct tongue with its origins in Norman, though today it is spoken by only a few. The beautiful scenery and mild weather have long made Jersey a popular tourist destination, with St Helier being an ideal departure point for trips around the island, which can easily be explored by car or by bike.



Guernsey

The second largest of the channel islands, is flatter and less dramatic looking than Jersey with the bucolic country lanes of Guernsey being ideal for exploration by bike or on foot.

Guernsey features its own local dialect derived from Norman known as Guernésiais, though it is diminishing with each generation. Guernsey famously provided exile to Victor Hugo, banished from France, Belgium and Jersey for his fierce opposition to Napoleon III. Proclaiming it the ‘rock of hospitality and freedom’, Hugo would live on Guernsey for 15 years, and was inspired by the beauty of the island to write his masterpieces, including Les Miserables.



Alderney

This is the most remote of the channel islands, lying close to the coast of France. Due to this continental proximity, a succession of leaders – ranging from Queen Victoria to Adolf Hitler – have vastly overestimated the strategic importance of Alderney



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In the Victorian Era, the British covered the island in a total of 18 forts, in order to dissuade French invasion, in a mania which Prime Minister William Gladstone denounced as ‘a monument to human folly’. Successive regional aspirants powers, like the German third Reich, added further to the islands fortifications, leaving today’s Alderney a unique landscape punctuated by serene natural beaches and wetlands and its monolithic human constructions, slowly being reclaimed by nature.







Sark

Sark holds the distinction as the most curious of the channel islands, being distinct as Europe’s last remaining feudal state, with suffrage only being introduced in 2008. Visiting Sark is like stepping into a time machine, with its many arcane laws from the medieval period creating its own unique charm. Among these are strict rules around land use, the absence of any income taxation, and the absence of motor vehicles, with only tractors for agriculture excepted. As such, for tourists there are three ways to explore the island – on foot, by bike, or by horse drawn carriage ride.

Sark is also an ideal spot for star-gazing, thanks to the absence of street-lights. It was the world’s first island to gain Dark Sky Status. Look up at night and you’ll see the vivid and glowing patchwork of the Milky Way galaxy.

Herm

Herm is one of the smaller islands at only 1.5 miles long and less than a mile wide. Like Sark it operates under a ‘no motors’ rule, with the one exception being quad bikes, which are used by hotels to transport luggage for guests.

Herm was used extensively as a granite quarry until the end of the 19th century, after which it featured a litany of private owners who used the

island for their own purposes. In 1889, Prince Blucher von Wahlstatt, bought the island lease, turning it into his own personal kingdom and introducing a colony of red-necked wallabies. The next tenant of the island was a writer, Compton Mackenzie, who wrote the novel *Fool's Gold* about his experiences on Herm, before selling the lease on to Sir Percival Perry, chairman of the Ford Motor Company. Today, Herm is mostly a chance to relax among pristine and beautiful scenery. The golden sands and turquoise waters of Shell Beach being the most popular spot.





The History of the Channel Islands: Cultural exchange between France and England

Their history and culture are influenced by their strategic location between the northern coast of France and the south coast of England. Formerly under the control of Brittany, invaded by Vikings, and annexed to the Duchy of Normandy, they emerged as miniature self-governing territories. The islands were transferred to the English crown when William the Conqueror annexed England in 1066. Although Britain lost Normandy in 1204, the islands remained a possession of the British crown.

The islands of Jersey & Guernsey have a seafaring tradition and their trade with the Newfoundland fisheries gave rise to the name New Jersey in the US. Trade further laid the foundations of these attractive islands' prosperity as well as agriculture (Jersey and Guernsey cows are recognisable the world over), milling, fishing, shipbuilding, and financial services.

During World War II they were the only part of Great Britain to be occupied by Nazi Germany. This caused considerable suffering to the locals. Some locals were deported as slave labourers. Jews were sent to concentration camps. Reprisals for partisan activities were harsh, and many islanders were reduced to near starvation by the end of the war. Accusations of collaboration and cover-ups poisoned relations between many islanders for decades. While on the islands it is possible to visit

sites that commemorate this history, such as the War Tunnels on Jersey.



Highlights of our tour:

This eighteen day tour is based in just two locations for the duration of the program. The group spends seven nights in the same hotel in St Helier, Jersey and then we travel to Guernsey, where we spend ten nights in a hotel in St Peter Port. Each day on guided walks we learn about the history, the culture and the wildlife that is unique to the Islands. The hikes selected are reasonably easy. Each day the group walks between 4km to 11km on a variety of terrains. Our tour also includes full day trips to Alderney, Sark and Herm.



Jersey is the biggest of the islands, the closest to France, and the most French in culture. Highlights of our trip to Jersey include Elizabeth Castle, perched on a tidal island in St. Aubin's Bay. The castle was built during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I to defend the islands from potential attack. We also make an excursion to the Jersey War Tunnels, which tell the fascinating history of local resistance to the Nazis. We also take the time to explore the natural beauty of Jersey, with walks along the striking coastline, and inland valleys.

Guernsey Island, by contrast, is closer to England. Important sights here include Hauteville House, where Victor Hugo wrote Les Miserables while in exile, and La Vallette Underground Military Museum and the German Occupation Museum, both of which provide insight into the island's military history.

The day by day itinerary sets out the touring and learning activities for the group for the duration of the tour of Jersey, Guernsey, Alderney, Sark & Herm.

You can read more about the Channel Islands and Britain on our country profiles pages where you'll also find all other Odyssey tours

departing for these destination.

For more details about the Channel Islands small group walking tour, click the ‘Top 5’ or ‘Itinerary’ buttons above! If you’re keen to experience this tour offered by Odyssey Traveller, please call or send an email. Or, to book, simply fill in the form on the right hand side of this page.

About seniors walking tours from Odyssey Traveller

Odyssey Traveller offers a range of walking tours each year paced for senior travellers. The collection of walks are for active mature and senior travellers, particularly those who seek out walking tours that are typically off the main circuit. To help you prepare for any walking program whether with Odyssey or another company this ist if articles is intended to help you prepare for your holiday.

- articles on Selecting walking shoes for women
- article on footwear and walking shoes
- article on what to pack when travelling.
- article on maintaining muscle fitness in senior and mature age travellers
- article on selecting socks for walking
- article detailing six great short walks in Britain
- article on preparing for a walking holiday
- article on Pilgrim walks in Europe
- article on walking in there Lake District

Articles published by Odyssey Traveller about the Channel Islands & Britain

The following articles that should assist your enjoyment of this tour to the Channel Islands written by Odyssey Traveller.

- Channel Islands Wildflowers, potato peel pie and rebels.
- Understanding British Churches
- Icons of British villages
- Studying Gargoyles and grotesques
- Victorian Country life
- Britain's neolithic past
- Lumps and bumps, how to read the British landscape
- English village history
- Britain's National trust a history

You can also browse all articles Odyssey published about Britain.







External articles to assist you on your visit to the Channel Islands

The following external links should assist you in planning your trip to the Channel Islands of Great Britain as a tourist and a walker.

- Hiking advice for women
- Aluminium water bottles safe for water?
- Bringing too much luggage and overpacking the day pack.
- Tips for preventing dehydration when walking
- Channel Islands Overview by the BBC.
- About the Channel islands
- Channel Islands in WWII

Highlights

1. Walk the coastal route of Jersey, viewing secluded beaches, castles and much more along the way.
2. La Hogue Bie Museum – home to one of the world's ten oldest buildings, even older than the Pyramids of Giza.
3. Visit the Hamptonne Country Life Museum, and get a better insight intro traditional rural life in Jersey
4. In Guernsey visit therecently restored Hauteville House (Victor Hugo's house) and learn more about the island's military history.
5. Enjoy full day excursions to Alderney, Sark & Herm.



Itinerary

Day 1

Locations: St. Helier, Jersey

Overview:

You arrive at the hotel in St. Helier on Jersey by own arrangements, In the evening the group gets together for a welcome dinner and briefing of the tour.

The group is based for the first seven nights in St Helier.

Accommodation:

The Savoy Jersey, or similar

Day 2

Locations: St. Helier, Jersey

Overview:

Today we have a full day of sightseeing in and around St. Helier. This will us to familiarise ourselves and learn more about the area before setting off to explore its perimeter in earnest on Day 3. Our sightseeing today includes entrance to the Maritime Museum and visitor center, and

to the War Tunnels in nearby St. Lawrence.

Accommodation:

The Savoy Jersey, or similar.

Day 3

Locations: St. Helier, Jersey

Overview:

Today we begin with a visit to the Elizabeth Castle, perched upon a tidal island in St. Aubin's Bay accessible by a short ferry shuttle – if timing is right, we may be able to walk across instead.

We begin our guided tours with an easy-going day to warm up. We follow the curve of the bay round to St. Aubin's Bay (3km), with some free time to visit the Harbour Gallery.

We then drive south onto the peninsula of Noirmont Point, to visit, opening times permitting, the CIOS sites of Battery Lothringen and Marine Peilst and Tower (entrance included but usually only open on weekends), and continue around St. Brelade's Bay(5km). There will be free time to explore the seafront town before returning to St. Helier.

Dinner tonight is included and will be in a local restaurant.

Accommodation:

The Savoy Jersey, or similar.

Day 4

Locations: St. Helier, Jersey

Overview:

Today we pick up where we left of the previous day. After breakfast as island packers we will be transferred to St. Brelade's Bay and will then head west along the coast to the south-western corner of the island, Corbiere Lighthouse (6km). One of the most scenic and secluded beaches in all the Channel Islands can be found en route at Beauport.

After walking the causeway at Corbiere, we will transfer away from the coast to experience some of Jersey's best inland walking, taking a walkalong the scenic Waterworks Valley and following the leafy

woodland path along the Chemin des Moulins to the Hamptonne Country Life Museum, which provides insight intro traditional rural life in Jersey (3km). It is a short hike that reveals the islands natural beauty.

Dinner tonight is included and will be in a local restaurant.

Accommodation:

The Savoy Jersey, or similar.

Day 5

Locations: St. Helier, Jersey

Overview:

Today's walking (13km) will take in the main features of the western and north-western coasts – beginning at St. Ouen's Bay, a long sweeping sandy beach which stretches virtually the entire length of the west coast. After the beach, we climb up the Plemont headland, which is scattered with numerous military buildings and ruins and stark coastal features such as Le Pinacle outcrop, you have a chance to enjoy the breathtaking views. The undulating cliff path continues to Plemont Bay, where the group will then be shuttled to the sheltered cove of Greve de Lecq to have some lunch(own expense) and recharge.

This afternoon's walking will include a visit to the collapsed caves of the Devil's Hole and end at Sorrel Point.

Accommodation:

The Savoy Jersey, or similar

Day 6

Locations: St. Helier, Jersey

Overview:

After breakfast, the group will head to Bonne Nuit Bay to continue walking the northern coastline today. The more rugged and severe north coast makes for some of the more challenging but of course also the most impressive Channel island hiking the group may enjoy. Walking on Jersey, with the coastal path to Bouley Bay snaking along the top of

some of the island's highest cliffs(10km).

Our coach will collect us at Bouley Bay and transfer us to Rozel.

The Hungry Man shack in Rozel is one of the island's famed eating spots offering some of the freshest seafood on the island, with their signature crab sandwiches filled with crabs caught that very day so a light lunch here has been included.

En-route back to St. Helier from Rozel, we stop at La Hogue Bie Museum – home to one of the world's ten oldest buildings (older than the Pyramids of Giza), one of Europe's finest passage graves.

Accommodation:

The Savoy Jersey, or similar.

Day 7

Locations: St. Helier, Jersey

Overview:

This morning, the we will transfer to Flicquet Bay at the island's north-eastern corner to begin our final day of walking on Jersey, completing the coastal route. Today's walkdown the east coast includes a stop at the scenic bay next to St. Catherine's breakwater, and the imposing hilltop castle of Mont Orgueil at Gorey, whose scenic harbour offers a multitude of dining options for lunch(own expense).

The walk continues down Grouville Bay to the south-eastern corner of the island, at La Rocque harbour. Our coach will take us back toto St. Helier, or those who are keen can continue walking the extra 5km.

Dinner tonight will be in a local restaurant.

Accommodation:

The Savoy Jersey, or similar.

Day 8

Locations: St. Peter Port

Overview:

After breakfast we will be transferred to St. Helier harbour to catch the ferry to Guernsey.

Please note that ferry departures are subject to last-minute time changes or even cancellation due to weather, (so the itinerary may be subject to change).

On arrival in Guernsey we'll be transferred to our hotel and the remainder of the day is at leisure.

We be based in the same hotel for the next 10 nights in St. Peter Port as the island is again so small, all the sights can be easily be explored on day excursions.

Dinner tonight will be in our hotel.

Accommodation:

Duke of Richmond Hotel, or similar.

Day 9

Locations: St. Peter Port

Overview:

Today we have a full day of sightseeing in and around St. Peter Port to get to know the town and surrounding areas before we start our scheduled walks around Guernsey. During our sightseeing we will visit Castle Cornet, the recently restored Hauteville House (Victor Hugo's house) and the James Dorey Centre.

Accommodation:

Duke of Richmond Hotel, or similar

Day 10

Locations: St. Peter Port

Overview:

This morning we head south out of St Peter Port to Fort George, with a visit to La Vallette Underground Military Museum which provides good insight into the island's military history.

From here we drive to Fermain. This south-east corner of the coast is a haven for seabirds and wildflowers, with rugged cliffs and great panoramic views out to sea. We will enjoy a nice walk on the beach.

Along the way we will stop and visit the Sausmarez Subtropical Gardens and for guided tour of Sausmarez Manor.

From Icart, we will return to St Peter Port by coach.

Accommodation:

Duke of Richmond Hotel, or similar.

Day 11

Locations: St. Peter Port

Overview:

This morning we begin our day's walking from the picturesque Petit Bot Bay, where we visit the German Occupation Museum which provides further insight into this turbulent period of the island's history. The group can also get up close to one of the island's 15 famed loophole towers, built during the 18th century to defend against potential French attacks.

We will drive from Petit Bot Bay to Pleinmont, where a well-preserved stone circle 'Fairy Ring' offers evidence of Guernsey's superstitious history. We will then walk along the coastal path, finishing at Portelet Beach where we will have some free time to explore the area.

Dinner tonight will be in a local restaurant.

Accommodation:

Duke of Richmond Hotel, or similar.

Day 12

Locations: St. Peter Port

Overview:

Today's day of walking will complete the group's circling of Guernsey island, beginning from Mont Cuet and following the coastal route along the northern and eastern coasts all the way back to St. Peter Port, with highlights en route including the harbours of Beaucette, Bordeaux and St. Sampson's and the fortifications of Fort Doyle and Vale Castle.

The first leg of the walk to St. Sampson is around 10km; if some of the group prefer not to walk the remaining 4km to St. Peter Port, they can transfer to the hotel on the coach. The north coast has long stretches of wild coastline but with gentle terrain, making for fairly easy walking.

Accommodation:

Duke of Richmond Hotel, or similar.

Day 13

Locations: St Peter Port

Overview:

Today we enjoy a full day excursion to Herm. It is the smallest of the main Channel Islands and the closest to Guernsey, taking just 15-20 minutes to reach by ferry. A guide will meet us upon arrival on Herm and lead an easy and leisurely half-day walking tour encircling this tiny island, whose northern half is entirely bordered by white sand.

We return by ferry to St Peter Port and transfer to our hotel.

Dinner tonight will be at a local restaurant.

Accommodation:

Duke of Richmond Hotel, or similar.

Day 14

Locations: St. Peter Port

Overview:

This morning, after breakfast, we transfer to the port and take the fast ferry to Alderney. This still takes 1.5 hours!
We will be met at the ferryport on Alderney, to embark on a full day of exploring by mini-coach. We will view many sights from the coach, with possibility to stop for a photos of course, including the beaches of Saye, Arch and Corblets. We will drive to Braye to Mannez Point, past the lighthouse and the Nunnery – Britain's best preserved small Roman Fort, before an included lunch in a local restaurant. After lunch we will do a short walk to the western shore where we can Les Etacs – the Gannet Colony.
We will return to Peter Port by ferry.

Accommodation:

Duke of Richmond Hotel, or similar.

Day 15

Locations: St. Peter Port

Overview:

After breakfast, our coach takes us to Rocquaine where we visit the Fort Grey Shipwreck Museum.
From here we will walk (2km) to L'Eree, before driving to Vazon ,with countless small nature reserves and conservation areas along the coast such as Shingle Bank and Colin Best Nature Reserves. We will visit Port Soif, with chances to see Fort Hommet and Cobo Bay on the way.
Before driving back to our hotel, we will visit Rousse and its Loophole Tower.

Accommodation:

Duke of Richmond Hotel, or similar.

Day 16

Locations: St. Peter Port

Overview:

Today we have a full day trip to Sark by ferry. Sark is within easy reach of Guernsey and is served by a regular ferry service.
Sark is a rockier affair than some of its neighbouring islands, meaning fewer beaches but some impressive coastal scenery and cliffs. After a steep ascent from the harbour, the island is largely a raised plateau, so the walking should still be relatively easy-going.
Upon arrival at the port, we will be met by a tractor bus who will take us to La Colinette, from where we will walk to La Seigneurie for a guided tour, and stop to view 'The Window in The Rock' on the western coast. After lunch together in a local restaurant, we will walk to the southern edge of the island, crossing the 'La Coupee' isthmus to Little Sark, before walking back to the ferry terminal and returning to Guernsey.

Accommodation:

Duke of Richmond Hotel, or similar.

Day 17

Locations: St. Peter Port

Overview:

This morning, after breakfast, our local coach will transfer us to Les Vauxbelets, where we visit the fascinating Little Chapel and German Military Underground Hospital. There will also be time to visit the Guernsey Goat's Cheese farm in Les Brehauts and the Guernsey Dairy cow farm in St Andrew.

We will then return to St Peter Port and have the remainder of the day at leisure until we meet again for our farewell dinner at a local restaurant.

Accommodation:

Duke of Richmond Hotel, or similar.

Day 18

Locations: St. Peter Port

Overview:

Our tour concludes after breakfast.

Inclusions / Exclusions

What's included in our Tour

- 17 nights of accommodation.
- 17 breakfasts, 4 lunches, and 7 dinners.
- Applicable entry fees and services of local guides.
- Services of a Tour Leader for the duration of tour.
- Gratuities and necessary tips.
- Detailed tour information booklet.

What's not included in our Tour

- International flights and departure taxes.
- Comprehensive travel insurance.
- Items of a personal nature such as telephone calls and laundry.

Level 3 - Moderate to Challenging

Participants must be in excellent health, extremely mobile and live an active lifestyle. Program activities may include up to 6 hours of continuous strenuous, moderate to fast paced activity per day over varied terrain.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any requests for further information about this tour or any others offered by Odyssey Travel.