



26 HIGHLAND HUISINIS TO CRABHADAIL

▶ Distance: 5½ miles/8.8km ▶ Time: 3 hours ▶ Grade: Moderate



Geological marvels at Ribh' an Tighe.

PHOTO: THEO FORD-SAGERS



CHOSEN BY... THEO FORD-SAGERS

On this walk you'll discover some of the remotest sands on Harris. Just getting to the start at Huisinis will feel like a trek, and if you've come up from busy England you'll feel you've reached the edge of the world. But setting off round the coast you'll discover a new realm entirely. For much of this walk, a partially abandoned settlement on the island of Scarp will be in view over a sand. If you've seen the 2004 film *The Rocket Post*, you'll know about a doomed mission here in the 1930s to establish a daring, rocket-powered postal service. Underfoot you'll come toe to

toe with the unfathomable aeons of geological time. Built on Lewisian Gneiss, the Outer Hebrides have the oldest formations in the British Isles, some of the oldest in the world. Here it manifests as weather-beaten boulders, crumbly and layered, and coves strewn with curiously bulbous rocks, streaked with colourful strata. The first and final half-hours are steep and quite hazardous, so preserve your energy and make sure you have enough daylight.

1 Start

From Huisinis Gateway visitor centre, ignore any maps indicating a route along a wall. It's simpler to follow the sandy

PLAN YOUR WALK



ROUTE

Start/parking Free parking at Huisinis Gateway, grid ref NG090971

Is it for me? Navigation is simple but some patches are rough and steep, unsuited to little legs. Navigable all year, but there's some very wet terrain in winter.

Stiles None

PLANNING

Nearest town Tarbert

Refreshments Harris Hotel, harrishotel.com, 01859 502154

Public toilets

Huisinis Gateway

Public transport Bus W12 from Tarbert to Huisinis.

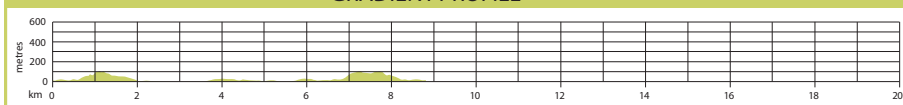
Operator: Kenneth MacLennan, 01859 511253

Maps OS Explorer 456; Landranger 13

vehicle track through the machair, turning R shortly before the tracks broadens into



GRADIENT PROFILE



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► OS Explorer map 456 ► Buy maps at: ordnancesurvey.co.uk/shop

a car park. Then, after about 100m, enter wide gate, then a smaller gate through wall nearly 200m later.

2½ mile/0.6km
Follow the path around the coast. It's well-defined but quite hard work, with steep sections that could put you in trouble if you make a wrong step, so take your time. The island of Scarp is visible across the water. When you reach the stone enclosure, head for the sand.

3 1½ miles/2.1km
Walk along the sand beach of Traigh Mheilein. With luck you might have the place to yourself. You'll encounter some impressive geology as you round the headland, where the shore becomes more rocky. Continue until you reach a sheltered cove full of smooth boulders.

4 2¼ miles/3.7km
At the far side of the cove, follow the sheep route up onto the grass. There's no decent path, but continue round the coast on higher, grassy ground. Soon you'll be looking up Glen Crabhadail. Where Loch na Cleabhaig ('crab loch') drains into the sea is a good spot for lunch, or hang on for the next beach.

5 3 miles/4.8km
Follow the sea shore to the explore the shielings and



a secluded sandy beach, then turn R towards the white building on the shore of the loch. Follow the path along the loch's edge. It sticks close to the water (don't be misled onto awkward higher ground too soon), then a little over 500m later, heads upwards away from the loch and up to the pass (bealach) between the hills.

6 4¼ miles/6.9km
As the path ascends, you've a choice. Turning R gives a longer route along the machair, and an opportunity to revisit the beach. Alternatively, the most direct return to

Huisinis continues straight up to the bealach. The path is vague, so keep L near the running water for your best chance of sticking to it. Descend the other side to rejoin the precipitous path you walked earlier. Your starting point is 2km away, which you'll reach by retracing your outward route. **CW**

**VIEW THE WALK ON
OS MAPS ONLINE:**
lfto.com/cwroutes

IN ASSOCIATION WITH



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DATE WALKED

TIME TAKEN

YOUR RATING