



the National Trust  
for Scotland  
a place for nature

# Iona

## Island explorer

### Description

Iona is one of the most iconic and sacred places in Scotland. It is a place of pilgrimage and continuing community spirit, where the diversity of land and seascapes, and even the quality of the light, have been a source of inspiration for generations.

### Grade

Moderate, care required in places

### Terrain

TAKE CARE! Rough, boggy ground and steep gullies in the north-west and south of the island. Ensure that you have appropriate clothing and footwear.

### Distance (from ferry jetty)

Columba's bay	2½ miles / 4km
Dun I	1 mile / 1.5km
The Marble Quarry	2 miles / 3.5km
The Hermit's Cell	1¼ miles / 2km
St Martin's Caves	3 miles / 4.5km

### Time

Columba's bay	2–3 hours
Dun I	1 hour
The Marble Quarry	2–3 hours
The Hermit's Cell	1–2 hours
St Martin's Caves	3–4 hours

### OS Map

Landranger Sheet 58

### Facilities

Restaurants    Toilets    Shops  
Suitable for picnics



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### 1 THE MACHAIR

On this wonderful coastal grassland you can play golf, watch for plumes of spray from the Spouting Cave, or follow the path south to pebbly Columba's Bay. The shell fragments in the wind-blown sand, along with years of cultivation and grazing, have produced the uniquely Hebridean machair habitat, with carpets of wild flowers including the delicate harebell and dove's-foot cranesbill.

### 2 CROFTING AND CORNCRAKES

In early summer it's hard to miss the rasping call of the secretive corncrake, although catching a glimpse presents more of a challenge! The island's crofting landscape hosts an important population of these birds, its small hayfields and patches of nettles and iris providing vital cover when they arrive back from Africa early in the year. Numbers are carefully monitored as Iona provides a haven for this globally rare species.

### 3 DÙN Ì

This is the island's highest hill at 101 metres. It offers great views and you can search for the mysterious Well of Eternal Youth.

### 4 COLUMBA'S BAY

Reputed to be the saint's landing place.

### 5 THE MARBLE QUARRY

This industrial heritage site is located in a secluded coastal gully, and is where the famous Iona marble was quarried.

### 6 THE HERMIT'S CELL

Possibly a monk's place of prayer in the central hills.

### 7 ST MARTIN'S CAVES

These wave-worn passages are accessible only at the lowest tides.



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Hermit's Cell

Dùn Ì 3

White Strand of the Monks

Dùn Bhuirg

6

Port Bàn

1 The Machair

Abbey

Bay at the Back of the Ocean

The Village

2

Spouting Cave

St Martin's Caves

7

Loch Staonaig

Sandeels Bay

4

5 Marble Quarry

Columba's Bay  
Port of the Coracle  
Port of the False Man

Surfaced road 

Suggested route 

A more detailed map is required for exploring