Wightlink welcomes you to the Isle of Wight

Holidays on the Isle of Wight always start the moment you set sail. It’s exciting. It’s different. You look out across the water at an Island just waiting to be discovered. And Wightlink will take you there.

Wightlink is the leading cross-Solent ferry operator. It carries almost five million holidaymakers and Islanders across the Solent every year. Nine ferries on three routes complete 48,000 sailings a year.

You can step off the train from London, hop on a Wightlink catamaran and be on the island in just 22 minutes, the car ferries take around 40 minutes from Portsmouth and Lymington, and sailings between Portsmouth and Fishbourne run 24 hours a day.

It’s an easy drive. The Hindhead Tunnel in Surrey has cut journey times to Portsmouth from Greater London – just head south down the A3. By contrast, Wightlink’s port at Lymington is reached by an attractive drive through the scenic New Forest. Onboard, passengers and drivers alike can relax in the lounges and enjoy some refreshments or take in the view from the outside decks.

Wightlink has a long and proud history of supporting holidaymakers and local people alike. It works closely with the tourism organisation ‘Visit Isle of Wight’ to promote the Island as one of the UK’s top visitor attractions. Closer to home, the company backs Island charities, arts groups and sports teams to the tune of £350,000 a year.
Wightlink – we are Part of Island Life

All you need to know about the Solent’s leading ferry operator.

Wightlink sponsors 62 talented Isle of Wight athletes

Every year Wightlink carries almost five million passengers to the beautiful Isle of Wight on 48,000 sailings on three routes.

You can get to Ryde Pier Head from Portsmouth Harbour in just 22 minutes on our passenger catamarans or take your car on a more leisurely crossing to Fishbourne (from Portsmouth) or Yarmouth (from Lymington).

Wightlink’s modern fleet is the best in the business. We have invested more than £70million in new ships and port facilities over the last six years, our reliability on the Portsmouth to Fishbourne route was 99.8% in 2013 and we have cut our CO2 emissions by almost 25% since 2007.

But we are also proud of our history. The earliest recorded ferries across the Solent sailed in the 1420s, our first purpose-built car ferry in 1927 cost £13,254 and carried just 16 cars and some of our ships took part in the D-Day invasion of France 70 years ago.

Did you know?

- Passengers on board the Wightlink ferry St Clare bought 57,600 cups of tea in 2013
- Wightlink sponsors 62 talented Isle of Wight athletes
- Wightlink ferries sail more than a quarter of a million miles to and from the Isle of Wight every year
- Over 30,000 people ‘like’ Wightlink’s Facebook page and over 11,000 people follow us on Twitter
- The heaviest load taken across the Solent was a steam locomotive weighing 70 tonnes for the Isle of Wight Steam Railway
- In 2013, the shop at our terminal in Lymington sold 4,536 Mars bars

Tell me more about the Isle of Wight

Our holiday Island off the sunny south coast of England is less than two hours from London but a world away from the pressures of everyday life.

Relax and unwind. Forget the hustle and bustle of the Mainland. Life is so different. Mile upon mile of unspoilt beaches. Villages nestling in remote locations. Towns offering unique and stylish life styles. Adventures round every corner.

Lose yourself on an Island that is rich in history, has acres of beautiful countryside and coast to explore, and offers the very finest dining, along with traditional English pubs — we have some of the oldest inns in the country and a fair amount of Michelin Stars.

There’s never a shortage of things to do either. Animal parks, adventure parks and even dinosaur hunting. So you’ll know the kids will sleep soundly, which means a bit of time for mum and dad, too.

And, not forgetting our Festivals. We’ve got more than you can shake a stick at including; The Isle Of Wight Festival, Bestival, V-Dub, Festival of the Seas, Garlic Festival and the Ryde Scooter Rally to name a few.

Whether you’re looking for somewhere to take the family; a place to relax and get away from it all; or a place where you can pit yourself against nature… Visit the Isle of Wight. A small and unique part of the British Isles, where life is slower, the people are friendlier and the choice of things to do is never-ending. We should know. After all, we’ve been an intrinsic part of Island life for decades.

Wightlink partners with Visit Isle of Wight, the official island tourism website, to provide information on hotels, B&Bs, self catering cottages, camping and caravan parks and other accommodation, attractions and restaurants.

Our Island Story

The Isle of Wight has a long and exciting history dating back to the days when dinosaurs roamed the earth. There is so much to explore but here are some of the highlights!

What did the Romans ever do for us? Find out at Brading or Newport Roman Villas. Discover why King Charles I was imprisoned in Carisbrooke Castle during the Civil War. Queen Victoria loved staying at Osborne House and you’ll be impressed too. Poet Alfred Lord Tennyson (who wrote The Charge of the Light Brigade) lived at Farringford House in the West Wight and gave his name to Tennyson Down. More recently, The Needles New Battery, home to a top secret rocket testing programme in the 1950s and 60s, is now in the care of the National Trust.

Fancy that!

Think you know everything about the Isle of Wight? Think again! The Island is one of the few places in the UK where you can find red squirrels. They have been outnumbered by the bigger grey ones, elsewhere in the country, but not here!

You can walk in the footsteps of the Iguanodon at Compton Bay on the south coast of the Island. These gentle giant dinosaurs 10 metres long and weighing four tons used to roam the Isle of Wight and their footprints have been captured in huge sandstone casts.

One of Britain’s oldest lighthouses is on the Isle of Wight. St Catherine’s Oratory on the southern most point of the Island is known to locals as the Pepper Pot. According to legend, it was built in 1314 by an Islander as a penance for stealing shipwrecked wine from a monastery, but it’s probably older than that.

The Isle of Wight was the home of the celebrated Victorian photographer Julia Margaret Cameron. You can see her work at Dimbola Museum and Galleries in Freshwater.

Like cricket? Bramble Bank between Cowes and the Mainland is the place to be during the year’s lowest tides. Teams from an Island and Mainland sailing club play a match but fast scoring is vital as the sandbank only becomes ‘land’ for an hour or so. Find out more fantastic island facts.
**Our pick of the Isle of Wights’ ‘must see’ attractions**

1. **The Needles Park**
   - Take the chairlift to the beach at Alum Bay at the westernmost point of the Isle of Wight, after sampling the attractions at the top of the cliff including the Glass Studio and Sweet Manufactory.
   - [www.theneckles.co.uk](http://www.theneckles.co.uk)

2. **Blackgang Chine**
   - Visit this iconic theme park high on a cliff on the south coast of the Island, attractions include life-sized moving dinosaurs and rides for all the family.
   - [www.blackgangchine.com](http://www.blackgangchine.com)

3. **Osborne**
   - Queen Victoria’s seaside home, built in the style of an Italian villa, is surrounded by a scenic estate. Don’t miss Her Majesty’s private beach and ‘bathing machine’.
   - [www.english-heritage.org.uk/osborne](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/osborne)

4. **Dinosaur Isle**
   - Marvel at the fossils dating back 126 million years in Britain’s first purpose built dinosaur museum built near the famous coast where so many dinosaur relics have been found.
   - [www.dinosaurisle.com](http://www.dinosaurisle.com)

5. **Isle of Wight Zoo**
   - Famous for its big cats, the ‘zoo on the beach’ offers regular animal encounters and a new Meet the Meerkat experience.
   - [www.isleofwightzoo.com](http://www.isleofwightzoo.com)

6. **Isle of Wight Steam Railway**
   - Ride behind a powerful steam engine in Victorian and Edwardian carriages through unspoilt countryside passing by quiet rural stations all summer long.
   - [www.iwsteamrailway.co.uk](http://www.iwsteamrailway.co.uk)

7. **Amazon World Zoo Park**
   - Learn about conservation and rainforests and come face to face with some of the world’s most unusual, beautiful and endangered creatures.
   - [www.amazonworld.co.uk](http://www.amazonworld.co.uk)

8. **Robin Hill Adventure Park and Gardens**
   - Sample the incredible range of rides, marvel at falconry displays and relax in the gardens, just some of the many day and night attractions
   - [www.robin-hill.com](http://www.robin-hill.com)

9. **Carisbrooke Castle**
   - A storybook castle in the heart of the Island, the former prison of King Charles I and home to the famous Carisbrooke donkeys.
   - [www.english-heritage.org.uk/carisbrooke](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/carisbrooke)

10. **Ventnor Botanic Garden**
    - The UK’s only subtropical botanic garden over 22 acres featuring exotic species that grow nowhere else in the country.
    - [www.botanic.co.uk](http://www.botanic.co.uk)

Wightlink Limited, Gunwharf Road, Portsmouth, PO1 2LA [wightlink.co.uk](http://www.wightlink.co.uk)
The Isle of Wight is the place to be for food and drink
The Isle of Wight is famous for The Garlic Farm but there is plenty more to enjoy. Minghella Ice Cream is known around the world, Isle of Wight cheese tickles the taste buds, Isle of Wight Bacon Company provides everything from roast gammon to sausages; Island honey and mustard are tasty treats and if you’re thirsty, try Isle of Wight wine and beer.

The Isle of Wight hosts amazing festivals
You could call us Festival Island. Throughout the summer there’s always something going on from Bestival and V-Dub to the Cowes Week yachting regatta and the Festival of the Sea.

The Isle of Wight is ideal for walkers
The Island’s scenic footpaths are made for anyone who loves the great outdoors, whether you enjoy a gentle stroll or want to tackle the 67 mile coastal path. Bring your walking boots and rucksack, pick up a map and you’re on your way. Check out the Autumn Walking Festival 24-27 October 2014 or pop next year’s main event in your diary now – 2-17 May 2015.

The Isle of Wight welcomes cyclists
Take your bike on the ferry or hire one when you arrive. The Island has hundreds of miles of cycle routes recommended by the Daily Telegraph and Lonely Planet. Have a go at the 62 mile Taste Round the Island Route, or investigate this autumn’s Cycling Festival 13-28 September 2014

Amazing places to stay on the Isle of Wight
There is so much choice of year round accommodation on the island – we simply could not list them all. So here are some examples to whet your appetite...

Try a modern Yurt at Arreton Manor for ‘glamping’ with a difference. It sleeps two and comes complete with a double bed, furniture heating and wifi. Just outside, a Log Cabin provides a shower room and cooking facilities.

The historic George Hotel in Yarmouth dates back to the 17th Century, just yards from Yarmouth castle and Wightlink’s ferry terminal.

Four star luxury on the Isle of Wight’s exquisite south coast at the Royal Hotel, Ventnor, delighting holidaymakers since 1832.

Fairytales come true at the Enchanted Manor in the village of Niton. This charming hotel, inspired by the fantasy paintings of Dorset artist Josephine Wall, has a specially warm welcome for honeymooners.

Go up in the world for a holiday with a difference in a tree house, amazing aerial accommodation with Into the Woods close to Wightlink’s ferry terminal in Fishbourne.

Go back in time by holidaying in an iconic American Airstream caravan at Ashby near Ryde. Vintage Vacations combines authentic fixtures and fittings with modern luxury

Dogs are welcome
Don’t leave Fido at home. The Isle of Wight is one of the most dog-friendly places in Britain and our four legged friends travel for free on Wightlink Ferries, providing you travel with them. There are so many places you could explore from beautiful beaches to magical woodland and fabulous attractions such as Blackgang Chine, Robin Hill Country Park and The Needles.

Get active
Love sports? The Island is the place to be. Whether you want to play golf, go horse riding, swim, sail, cycle or try your hand at something completely different such as archery, croquet, paragliding or tree climbing, your holiday is the perfect time to get active.
Media Enquiries

If you have a media question about Wightlink’s day to day operations, systems or corporate issues, please contact us.

If you have a Media enquiry then please call:

In-house Media Relations Specialist
Karen Woods on 07775 694266 or email karenwoods@wightlink.co.uk

Media Relations Manager
Chris Cowley on 07767 112603 or email chriscowley@wightlink.co.uk

Head of Marketing
Mark Persad on 07771 976363 or email markpersad@wightlink.co.uk

PR Enquiries – Flagship consulting

Flagship Consulting, an award-winning corporate and brand public relations consultancy, works with Wightlink Ferries to promote its services to the UK market as the ferry company of choice when enjoying the range of attractions, events and experiences the Isle of Wight is renowned for.

If you have a PR enquiry then please call:

Sophy Norris on 01392 248934 or email sophy.norris@flagshipconsulting.co.uk

Belinda Hallworth on 0207 886 8456 or email belinda.hallworth@flagshipconsulting.co.uk
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