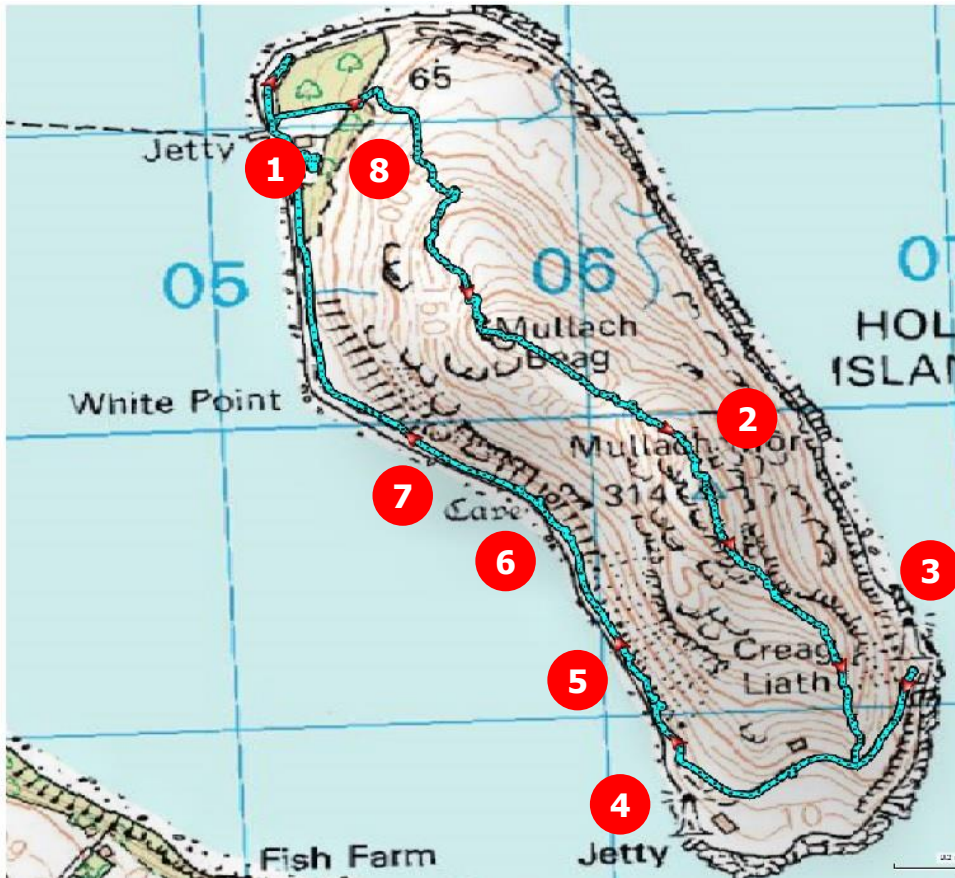


# Holy Isle

Firth of Clyde, Scotland



**OS maps:** OS Explorer 361

**Starting point:** Jetty on Holy Isle

**Duration:** 3 hours

**Distance:** 8.7km

**Height gain:** 423 metres

**Access:** Holy Isle ferry from Lamlash, Arran

**Activity:** walking

**Terrain:** sections of steep boggy, rocky ascent/descent through middle of the island; easy path on west coast

**Refreshments:** tea, coffee, water at welcome point

This is a hugely varied island with natural as well as cultural beauty and interest. The route starts with a steeper ascent of Mullach Beag and Mullach Mor with efforts rewarded by fine views of the towering spires of Goat Fell. A steep descent to the south of the island is followed by an easy path along the west coast which reveals much of the islands' history before returning to the Centre.

# Route detail

<b><u>Holy Isle 1</u></b>			
Distance (km)	Route description	Points of interest	Notes
0	On arrival a member of the community gives a brief introduction to the island and its beliefs along with a welcoming cup of tea. To start the walk go back to the jetty, turn left, pass through two posts with prayer flags and head uphill across the field to the stile and then follow all signs 'to the top'.	1	Stupas - a symbol of the enlightened mind of the Buddha. Its function is to restore, balance and transform negative energies to heal both our planet and ourselves.
2km	Follow the well marked and trodden path through the gorse and trees to Mullach Beag, over the saddle and up to Mullach Mor. Views of Goat Fell on Arran, Great Cumbrae, Adrossen on the mainland as well as Aisla Craig.	2	Mullach Mor summit
3.4km	Descend, avoiding the steep crevices and taking great care on the rocky slabs, to meet the lower path. Turn left to visit Pillar Rock Lighthouse and some great views of the east coasts' Nature Reserve.	3	Pillar Rock Lighthouse
	Retrace steps and head towards the lighthouse on the west coast and the closed retreat for women. Two eco-pods and a small wooden chalet can be seen on the right. These are the homes of two nuns on a lifetime retreat and the island home of Lama Yeshe Rinpoche, respectively.	4	The Inner Light Retreat is closed to the public. It is the home of several nuns on a three year retreat. Look out for plant sales of biodynamic & organic plants/seeds
	Continue along the west coast passed several carved rock-paintings	5	Rock paintings depict different deities and teachers of the Kagyu Lineage of Buddhism

# Route detail

<b><u>Holy Isle 2</u></b>			
Distance (km)	Route description	Points of interest	Notes
5.2km	Further north pass the Holy Well, also known as the Healing Well	6	For centuries this has been used to cure ills and bring blessings: take care though this water is not potable
5.3km	A little further on from the Holy Well a sign pointing up some steps indicates the cave where St. Molaise lived.	7	Cave of St Molaise. The roof and sides of the cave are covered with many marks and crosses, also 11th-13th century Runic inscriptions.
6.8km	Further north the path reaches the information centre and returns to the centre for World Peace and Health and its wonderful organic & biodynamic vegetable garden.	8	Centre for World Peace and Health. Do visit the organic gardens.
7.2km	Continue passed the information centre and jetty and take the path through the small bushes ahead to reach the north point of the island (the only place for telephone reception)		
8.7km	Return to the jetty. If the ferry is not in sight let the staff in the islands information centre know and they radio to let the boatman know you are waiting.		