

The Islands of Ryfylke – from Judaberg to Tau, a round tour by kayak

The islands of Ryfylke beckon you to explore their calm waters, sheltered coves and idyllic islets. With Judaberg as a springboard (itself a mere 40 minutes from Stavanger by express boat), you have a myriad of islands within reach. We strongly recommend that you use a sea



Kajak i Ryfylke Foto: Ryfylke Kajak

kayak for this tour – and you should be in good shape and have previous experiences paddling a kayak along the coast. Pay attention to weather forecasts, and be on the watch for signs of approaching foul weather. Due to some strong currents, please do not attempt to navigate the Lysefjord or Jøsenfjord without an experience guide.

The route we suggest is also well-suited to travellers exploring Ryfylke by small boat, without accommodation on board.

From Judaberg, set a northerly course to Sjernarøyane and Nord-Talgje (approx. 9 km). Much of the northwestern part of Nord-Talgje is a wilderness preserve and a designated recreation area. On Nodholmen, an islet northeast of Nord-Talgje, facilities include a quay, mooring rings, tables and benches, barbecue pits, toilets and a recycling station. The swimming area known as “the blue lagoon” is perfect for families with children.



Terjer Hidle på Norda-Hidle

After a relaxing rest here, the journey continues through the idyllic Sjernarøyane archipelago (approx. 5 km). We recommend travelling between Tjul and Kyrkjøy islands, then between Aubø and Kyrkøy, passing through Aubøsundet sound. If you do go on shore at Aubøsundet, you will be pleased to know that there are waymarked paths up to Fuglahammaren (3 hours) and Fåranibba (2 hours).



Spa-hotell Vævrære

From Aubøsundet our sea route continues in a southerly direction to Nord-Hidle (3 km), where you will find old houses, ancient grave mounds and other remnants of bygone ages. There is even an “erotic nature path”. At Eldhuset Bed & Breakfast on Nord-Hidle you can enjoy excellent home-cooking and accommodation. Reservations advised.

On Day 2, our journey takes us further south, to Halsnøy and Skartveitvågen, situated on the eastern side of this island. The distance from Nord-Hidle to Halsnøy is a mere 7 km, but the relatively open sea can prove quite a challenge on a windy day. At Skartveitvågen there is a nice guest harbour and a grocery shop; you deserve a rest after your crossing. Also worth a visit is Bjerga nursery, which is popular with tourists. It is renowned for delicious blackberries, and if you order ahead, the hosts will have a tasty meal waiting.

From Halsnøy chart an easterly course to the island of Randøy, passing through Børøysundet by Børøy island. As soon as you enter the Fisterfjord, aim your prow toward the village of Hjelmeland – perhaps hugging the shore as you paddle your kayak, thus avoiding any ship traffic. A perfect place for a break and a picnic is the islet of Espholmen in Døvika cove (approx. 9 km from Halsnøy), where it is sheltered and warm. This is not an officially designated recreation area, and there are no facilities here, so please take extra care to leave no trace of your visit!

The last leg of Day 2 takes us in a northeasterly direction to Hjelmelandsvågen and Spa-Hotel



Velvære (another 7 km). The hotel has a guest harbour, restaurant and popular spa facilities, in addition to comfortable accommodation.

Day 3 takes us from Hjelmeland to Tau, which is a fair distance. Should you need supplies, you can buy these at Hjelmelandsvågen. Our first leg is to Søre Børøyholmen in the Fisterfjord (approx. 13 km), an islet immediately south of Børøy. It is equipped with a guest harbour, barbecues, tables and benches, and toilets. For kayakers, a good alternative to the guest quay is the beach in the little cove, where you will also find the barbecues.

After a good rest, aim your kayak toward Rossøysundet (10 km to the southwest). This sound passes between Rossøy and the southernmost promontory of Fogn, and here you will find an excellent natural harbour that has been used by seafarers for many centuries. For the local travellers bound for Stavanger in open boats, this was often their last stop before reaching town. Today there is a guest pier, as well as barbecues, toilets and waste facilities. Should you yearn to explore on foot, there are good paths around the island – but beware of ticks in the undergrowth. Long sleeves and trousers are recommended.

Our very last leg takes us due south to the fjordside village of Tau (7 km), where there is a guest quay and accommodation. We recommend a visit to the mill park, Mølleparken. From Tau you can return to Stavanger by ferry or express boat (approx. 30 minutes).



Ryfylkeøyar

Foto: Dagfrid Vållestad

Essential charts:

- Statens Kartverk – coastal chart no. 16 (Tananger – Stavanger – Skudenes)
- Statens Kartverk – coastal chart no. 15 (Ryfylkefjordane – Sjernarøyane – Sauda)
- There are also boating charts that cover the areas you will be exploring.