

Island of variety

The Isle of Man has a diverse landscape, from wooded glens to rugged highlands, enjoying a temperate climate.



Geography and Climate

The Isle of Man occupies a central position in the Irish Sea, and also in the British Isles.

The Island is 52 kilometres (33 miles) long from north to south and 22 km (13 miles) wide from east to west at the widest point. The coastline, which covers over 160 km (100 miles), encompasses an area of 572 sq. km (221 sq. miles).

Despite its comparatively small size, the Island contains a wide variety of scenery. A range of hills stretch obliquely across the Island, the highest of which is Snaefell at 621 metres (2,036 feet).

Between these hills lie well defined valleys. Around the Island's flat northern plain are long sandy beaches which contrast markedly with the rocky cliffs and sheltered bays around the rest of the coastline. Over two thirds of the land mass is cultivated, principally the fertile northern and southern plains.

Population

The 2006 Census recorded a provisional residential population of 80,058. This represents an increase of 3,743 on the 76,315 recorded in the 2001 Census.

Climate

Due to the influence of the surrounding Irish Sea, the Island's climate is temperate and lacking in extremes. In winter, snowfall and frost are infrequent.

Even when snow does occur, it rarely lies on the ground for more than a day or two. February is normally the coldest month, with an average daily temperature of 4.9 C (41 F), but it is often relatively dry.

In summer, April, May and June are the driest months whilst May, June and July are the sunniest. July and August are the warmest months, with an average daily maximum temperature around 17.5 C (63 F). The highest temperature recorded at the Island's weather centre at Ronaldsway is 28.9 C or 84 F. Thunderstorms are rare.

Although geographically small, there is climatic variation around the Island. Rainfall and the frequency of hill fog both increase with altitude.

The highest point of the Island (Snaefell) receives some two and a quarter times more rainfall than Ronaldsway on the south east coast, where the annual average is 863 mm (34 inches).

Facts at a glance

Longest river: Sulby, 10.5 miles (17 km)

Highest peak: Snaefell, 2,036 ft (621 m)

Shortest distance to:

- England, 30 miles (48 km)
(Ramsey - Whitehaven)
- Wales, 48 miles (77 km)
(Calf of Man - Carmel Head, Anglesey)
- Scotland, 16 miles (26 km)
(Point of Ayre - Burrow Head)
- N. Ireland, 27 miles (43 km)
(Peel - Strangford Lough)

Links:

Isle of Man Meteorological Office:
www.iom-airport.com/virtual/meteor

Isle of Man Census information:
www.gov.im/treasury/economic/census

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