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One Month to Go: Orkney Set to Celebrate Sport and Culture at the International Island Games 2025

With just weeks to go, Orkney is putting the final touches to an unforgettable Island Games - where thrilling international sport meets vibrant island heritage, music, food, and community spirit.

A special tartan has been designed to commemorate the Games

With just one month to go until the Orkney 2025 Island Games begins, the island is gearing up for the largest event it has ever hosted.

From 12–18 July 2025, Orkney will welcome around 2,000 athletes from 24 island groups across the globe to compete in 12 sports: Archery, Athletics, Badminton, Bowls, Cycling, Football, Golf, Gymnastics, Sailing, Squash, Swimming, and Triathlon. This is the first time Orkney has hosted the Games, making it a landmark occasion for the islands.

A special tartan has been designed to celebrate the Games. Created by Scottish Borders' mill Lochcarron of Scotland, in collaboration with Aurora Jewellery and Beccy May, Vice Chair of Orkney 2025, inspiration for the design was taken from the vibrant colours in the Games logo. It celebrates Orkney's unique heritage and its role as host to one of the world's most inspiring island sporting events. It pays tribute to the landscapes, culture, and community spirit that define the islands. The striking design produced in lambswool, is being made into wraps, scarves and ties along with a variety of accessories, available for visitors and competitors to purchase as a memento of the Orkney 2025 Island Games.

Beccy May, Vice Chair of Orkney 2025, said, "Being involved in creating the tartan for the Orkney 2025 International Island Games was a real honour. I wanted every thread and colour to reflect the spirit of the islands - the blues of the surrounding seas, the greens of our windswept landscapes, and the vibrant reds and golds symbolising community, heritage, and celebration. This tartan represents the connection across all of the island communities involved in the Games coming together through sport."

The Games promise not only thrilling sports competitions but also a vibrant celebration of island culture that visitors won't want to miss. While athletes compete in a wide range of exciting events, spectators can also immerse themselves in Orkney's rich heritage through a packed programme of cultural activities.

Orkney's iconic St Magnus Cathedral, situated in the heart of Kirkwall, will display their magnificent Sails, which were first hung from the pillars in 1993. The fourteen free-hanging sails are painted with images inspired by a series of one-line poems, specially written by Orkney's own "Poet Laureate" George Mackay Brown. A musical composition by folk musician, Brian Cromarty, will complement the Sails. Brian has created a bespoke soundtrack of Orkney which will underpin the Island Games, and the pleasure Orkney has found hosting it.



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Island Games Scrivener and Story gatherer, Gaby Barnby, has also created short sound bites from submitted writings gathered from all the islands participating in the 2025 Island Games. These will be played throughout the St Magnus Cathedral allowing visitors to hear the distinct accents, languages and dialects from around the world that are part of the Island Games family.

In addition to the events taking place at St Magnus Cathedral, Stromness will feature a Street Gallery showcasing visual art and writing on the theme of the Games, and the Northlight Gallery will host a collective of artists creating works that reflect the Island Games. Haiku and poems will also be displayed at Games facilities across Orkney, as part of the Island Games Island Voices project which invited individuals from all participating islands to write something about their own special communities.

Kirsty Talbot, Director of Orkney 2025, said, "From traditional music and storytelling to local food festivals, arts exhibitions, and community events, the Islands will be alive with energy and creativity. Whether you're cheering from the sidelines or taking a moment to explore Orkney's unique traditions, Orkney 2025 offers something unforgettable for everyone. We are on the one month to go countdown now and the energy in Orkney is electric!"

Business Minister Richard Lochhead said, "This international event will shine a spotlight on our island communities.

"The tartan, a collaboration between an artist and manufacturer in some of Scotland's most northern and southern communities, highlights how the Games has offered opportunities to businesses across Scotland. Locals are also set to enjoy economic benefits and a varied programme of cultural events.

"With only one month until kick off, I want to once again thank the organisers for their dedication and enthusiasm. This is set to be an unforgettable Island Games."

Dawn Robson-Bell, Managing Director, Lochcarron of Scotland said: "Creating the Orkney 2025 tartan has been a truly special project for Lochcarron of Scotland. We are proud to weave together the heritage, landscapes, and vibrant spirit of Orkney into a design that will serve as a lasting tribute to this landmark event."

The Games kick off with a spectacular Opening Ceremony and Athletes' Parade in Kirkwall on Saturday 12 July, hosted by Lorraine Kelly and local presenter Stewart Bain. Some of the highlights throughout the week include the triathlon in Stromness, cycling road races through the West Mainland, and the half marathon in Kirkwall, every venue will be alive with activity, showcasing the talent and determination of athletes while creating memories for spectators and participants alike. The Opening Ceremony and all of the sporting events are free and open for all to attend on a first come, first served basis.



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Those unable to travel to Orkney to experience the Games first hand will be able to follow the action on the Orkney 2025 dedicated youtube streaming channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@Orkney2025>

For more information on the Orkney 2025 Island Games, please visit: <https://www.orkney2025.com>

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For all media enquiries please contact Muckle Media on orkney2025@muckle-media.co.uk

Orkney 2025 International Island Games is principally funded by **Orkney Islands Council** [Welcome to Orkney Islands Council](#) , **sportscotland** and the **Scottish Government**.

Orkney 2025 International Island Games will bring together athletes from the 24 island groups to compete in 12 Sports: Archery, Athletics, Badminton, Cycling, Football, Golf, Gymnastics, Lawn Bowls, Sailing, Squash, Swimming and Triathlon.