

JEWELS OF THE SCOTTISH ISLES | OCEAN ATLANTIC



INTRODUCTION

Visit no less than 7 Scottish Isles on this incredible expedition. Departing from Greenock on the Scottish West Coast you will venture to the island of Islay, famous for its peaty whiskies. Further north you will see dramatic volcanic formations at Staffa and Rum, Oban and Iona whilst your guest lecturers will give you a rich understanding of the islands geological history. Continuing on to the Outer Hebrides you will see the dramatic cliffs of the St. Kilda archipelago and the rugged scenic island of Orkney - home to some of Europe's oldest preserved dwellings. This incredible spring voyage offers an unforgettable and intimate adventure to the Scottish waters, complete with unique wildlife encounters, spectacular landscapes, and whiskey.

ITINERARY

DAY 1: Embarkation in Greenock

Our journey begins in Greenock, where MV Ocean Atlantic is located by the dock. If you arrive early we recommend that you take a walk on the Esplanade, which is a road right down by the water. From the road you can see across the Clyde to the Highlands, Kilcreggan and Helensburgh. Fine views to start our adventure with. Boarding is in the afternoon, where the cabins are designated. After the mandatory security review and drill, we sail out along the coast of Greenock that has seen active fishing boats since as far back as year 1164.



TRIP CODE

ACABJS

DEPARTURE

22/05/2022

DURATION

8 Days

LOCATIONS

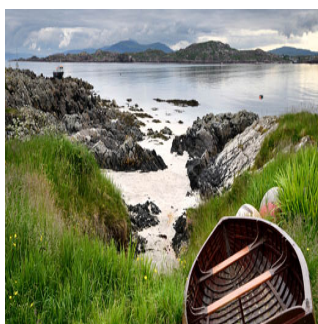
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DAY 2: Iona and Oban

Today's first visit will be steeped in Christian history as we visit the small pilgrimage island of Iona. It is considered the birthplace of Christianity in Scotland with the arrival of St. Columba in AD 563 and the founding of the Abbey. The Abbey's long history is rich with Viking attacks, foreign monks and even abandonment at one time, before being reconstructed to its present state. Today, Iona remains a place of pilgrimage and spirituality. Our visit entails a walk around the small town and free time around the Abbey. The capital on the Scottish west coast is Oban. A picturesque Scottish harbor town called "The Gate of the Hebrides", Oban offers typical Scottish city life. If you want more exercise, it is highly recommended to walk up to McCaig's Tower, built in the 19th century. A monument that resembles the Colosseum of Rome. Whisky is of course present here: In Oban, clearly, they have 'Oban', a small town distillery with a big whisky production (open every day, including Sundays). A more historical visit could be the Oban War and Peace museum that has excellent displays depicting Oban over the years (not only during the war). After our afternoon visit, we continue northbound towards Staffa.



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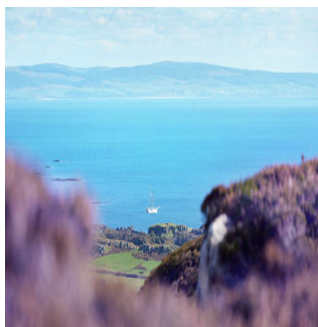
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DAY 3: Bunnahabhain Distillery, Isle of Islay

The smell of peat and smoke fills our nostrils as we approach Islay. For decades, the peat has been the primary source of fuel on this small Inner Hebride island. This, the most southernmost of the island group is known as the Queen of the Hebrides. The island has around 3200 inhabitants and an impressive 130 miles of beautiful coastline. We use the ship's Zodiacs to land at the Bunnahabhain distillery where we will take a short tour of the distillery, learning about the process of whisky making from start to finish. Afterwards a tasting is well deserved. A visit including tasting typically takes 30 minutes. Islay is probably best known for its malt whiskies and has a total of eight working distilleries. Whisky is one of the most important sources of income for the island. The whisky they produce is soft, dry, smoked, and dusty at the same time. For this reason, Islay is the most visited of all the Inner Hebrides in proportion to its size. Be sure to be on the lookout for wildlife while we navigate around Islay and the Hebrides, where seals, otters, geese, waders and golden eagles amongst others, have their home.



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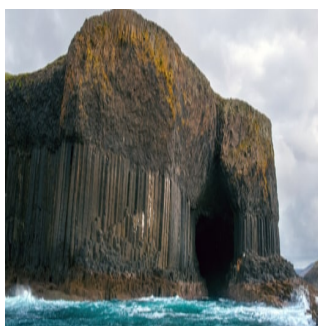
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DAY 4: Islands of Staffa and Rum

Venturing south around Mull during the night, we come upon a truly marvelous natural oddity. We plan to land at the small isle of Staffa. The islands hexagonal basaltic pillars were formed many million years ago, and look breathtaking as we inspect them. If the weather conditions allow it, we will make our way into Fingal's cave. Staffa is uninhabited but many visitors come to see the natural wonders and formations. One such guest was the composer Felix Mendelssohn. So inspired by the sounds and views, that the composition "the Hebrides" was composed shortly after his visit. We will see if we can spot puffins, herring gulls or other flyers whilst we traverse the wonderful little island. While navigating the waters to Staffa and beyond, we must keep our eyes open for sightings of dolphins, porpoises and minke whales, who are all regular guests of this area in the warm periods. After our first stop of the day, we set our sights on the more northerly isle of Rùm. The mountain filled island allows us to take a walk in the nature or join our group tour to the famous Kinloch Castle. Easily the most famous building on the island, the castle was built by George Bullough who inherited the whole island from his father. The island was a private sporting estate from 1845-1957. If you opt to take a walk, the rugged landscape offers great trails and views. We board our ship and now set off towards the remote St. Kilda.



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DAY 5: Hirta, St Kilda

Today we arrive to the dramatic and isolated island of Hirta, famous for its highest sea cliffs in the United Kingdom. We have traversed 45 miles west of the Outer Hebrides coast to reach this most remote part of the United Kingdom. The uninhabited island has remnants of human heritage, in the shape of medieval villages and architecture. The islands were mainly used for seabird hunting and grazing. The last 36 St Kildans left on 29 August 1930 because life had become too difficult on the remote archipelago. Today there is summer residents in a mix of staff from owners National Trust for Scotland, volunteers and scientists. The volcanic archipelago that consists of the islands of Hirta, Dun, Soay and Boreray has made its way on the UNESCO world heritage list, holding a dual status of both natural and cultural treasure. The spectacular natural landscapes, hidden coves, rugged terrain and bird rich coasts are what we will spend our time on during our visit. St Kilda is a breeding ground for many important seabird species. So we will be on the lookout for northern gannets, Leach's petrels, puffins and the northern fulmar, and if we are extremely lucky, we may find the endemic St Kilda wren pecking for insects in the thick vegetation around the cliffs and rocky slopes. When seaborne our eyes are as always peeled for sea mammals, which in these areas also could include humpbacks and even orcas. In the afternoon, we continue our voyage towards the Outer Hebrides.



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DAY 6: Stornoway

As our Jewels of the Scottish isles continues, we navigate through the northwestern part of Scotland. We find ourselves in the remote string of islands known as the Outer Hebrides, herein lies the Isle of Lewis and Harris, a rugged and bleakly beautiful land of heather and moor, loch and stream; home to the main harbor town of Stornoway. Arriving to the main town in the early morning, we offer an optional excursion that takes us along the wild scenery of the Outer Hebrides and ancient history in the form of the Neolithic Callanish Standing Stones. Expect the guides to share many stories behind the sights we pass. (The excursion is part of the excursion package and is not included in the price of the trip). Back in Stornoway we board the ship to sail during lunch, so we can circumnavigate the Shiant islands before setting off towards the Orkney islands. The Shiant isles translate from gaelic to something like “enchanted isles”. The privately owned islands has large populations of seabirds and its protected marine area make it what some would call “paradise for observations”. We spend some time on the breathtaking scenery before we move on.



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DAY 7: Kirkwall, Orkney Islands

During the night we'll have sailed out into the waters between Outer and Inner Hebrides, and in the morning we'll reach the town of Kirkwall on the windy Orkney off the mainland of Scotland. Orkney is old Norse for the "seal islands", and, like the other North Atlantic islands, Orkney has a rich Viking story. We depart Kirkwall and head into the west of Mainland, Orkney's largest island. Along the way we will pass through rolling gentle landscapes into the Neolithic Heartland of Orkney, an area designated as a World Heritage Site due to its wealth of pre-historic archaeology. Passing the Standing Stones of Stenness, we will stop at the 5000 year old ceremonial circle: the Ring of Brodgar. From here we continue to as history goes even further back to one of the oldest European civilizations. Skara Brae, Northern Europe's Pompeii, which was hidden for almost 5000 years before a massive storm (150 years ago) revealed the ancient settlement. The 10 small homes are almost ready for moving into, fully furnished and with sanitation - all made in stone. Back in Kirkwall, we will visit one of the local distilleries for a tasting of some of the northernmost drops in Scotland. A fitting end to an excursion with such an amazing historical backdrop. (The excursion is part of the excursion package and is not included in the price of the trip). In the afternoon we departure south to Aberdeen.



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DAY 8: Aberdeen, Scotland

The captain will lead the ship southwards along the east coast of Scotland, and we'll arrive in Aberdeen, Scotland's third-largest city. At this time we'll say farewell to the ship and its crew before departing for the airport and beginning the return journey.




INCLUSIONS & DETAILS

Accommodation

Cabin on board ship

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Inclusions	Cabin accommodation on board ship All meals whilst on board All scheduled landings and excursions by zodiac Guiding and leadership by experienced expedition team Expedition jacket (yours to keep) Complimentary use of muck boots during the course of your voyage Comprehensive pre departure material Port surcharges, permits and landing fees EXCLUSIONS International Flights Any optional activities not mentioned in the itinerary Visa and reciprocity fees (if applicable) Personal expenses such as laundry and on board communications Any pre/post departure stays not included in the itinerary Customary gratuities for staff and on board crew
Difficulty Rating	2 (light adventure)
Single Surcharge	Available upon request. Contact us for more information.
Notes	Please note this itinerary is subject to change depending on weather and ice conditions.
Price Dependent upon	Departure date, seasonality and availability.

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SUSTAINABILITY

Being environmentally accountable is a crucial part of our organisation. Chimu is currently striving towards using less paper, taking several initiatives to do so and tracking our progress along the way. Our goal: A paperless organisation. For this reason, all information given to you will be sent electronically. We encourage those who choose to travel with us to support our aspirations and actions and ask that you reconsider printing out documentation. To view these documents, you can download them to your iPad or portable computer before and during your trip.

Chimu is passionate and dedicated to sustainability measures and understands the crucial part sustainability plays within the tourism industry.

We use local guides and office staff to both maximise local employment opportunities and minimise carbon footprint. Local guides also ensure you benefit from the intimate knowledge, passion and culture of the country you're visiting. Our guides are all highly qualified (most with university degrees) or equip with many years of experience and are paid above the standard wage. Whether it be our knowledgeable local guides, locally produced meals or the transport on tour, we do not use imported goods when local products are available. We aim to minimise our impact on the environment and give as much back as possible to the communities we work in.

While visiting the many national parks, heritage sites, museums and landmarks our

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travellers are encouraged to explore whilst remaining culturally aware and sensitive. We further encourage you to buy appropriate souvenirs and discourage the buying of anything wrongfully made or taken from the environment i.e. shells and endangered species products. Information on how you can be environmentally conscious, and travel responsibly will be made available in our Travellers Guides and provided during your travels by guides and staff.

For more information on our sustainability policies, including how we are striving towards being a paperless organisation, click [HERE](#)

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