



## **Orkney & The Outer Hebrides**

**10 Days/ 9 nights**

### **Places you explore**

**Orkney Isles** - These beautiful islands are full of ancient history and wildlife.

**Glencoe and Rannoch Moor** - Be moved by the sheer beauty and tragic tales of one of Scotland's most famous landscapes.

**Loch Ness** - Take a chance to spot the famous Loch Ness Monster.

**Skara Brae and Ring of Brodgar** - Learn how people used to live in ancient times at these prehistoric monuments.

**Cairngorms National Park** - Gaze in awe at Scotland's most beautifully rounded peaks.

**Lewis and Harris** - These two areas with distinct landscapes make up the biggest island in Scotland.

**Callanish standing stones** - This mysterious monument is even older than Stonehenge.

**White sands of Luskentyre** - Walk along this phenomenal beach and feel like you're in the Scottish Maldives.

**Isle of Skye** - Traverse one of the world's most stunning islands, with beautiful views around every corner.

**Eilean Donan Castle** - An iconic and gorgeous 13th century castle that once warded off Viking invasions.



## Day 1

Departing Edinburgh you head west towards Stirling, passing Stirling Castle and the Wallace Monument. You also pass Doune Castle (set of Monty Python's "Holy Grail") before stopping in the small town of Callander for a refreshment stop.

You now cross over the Fault Line into the magnificent Highlands taking in the splendour of Loch Lubnaig, Loch Earn, Glen Ogle and Glen Dochart, as you travel north over the wild and remote Rannoch Moor into Glencoe. The stunning views and spectacular landscapes of our own super (extinct) volcano and scene of the infamous massacre of the Clan MacDonald in 1692, where many of the Clan MacDonald were slaughtered. You stop in this imposing mountain Glen so you can enjoy the spectacular views.

You continue north up the Great Glen to the mysterious beauty of Loch Ness, travelling the whole 23 miles of the famous Loch - plenty of time to try and spot "Nessie!" You arrive at your destination of Inverness at approx 18.30 where you will be dropped off at your booked accommodation. The evening is free for you to explore the 'Capital of the Highlands'.





## Day 2

Is an early start, leaving behind the 'Capital of the Highlands', crossing over the Black Isle, and



past Dunrobin Castle. From here you drive through the northeast Highland coastline, travelling into some of Scotland's most dramatic scenery, and enjoy amazing views of some of Europe's oldest landscapes and the chance to see wildlife such as Golden Eagles and red deer.

Onwards through Scotland's most northerly mainland village, John o' Groats, and then to Gills Bay, where you

board the ferry, crossing the Pentland Firth into the Orkney Archipelago. From here it is a short drive to the famous Italian Chapel where we stop for a visit before continuing to the Viking stronghold of Kirkwall, Capital of Orkney where you shall stay for two nights. Here you can visit Kirkwall's magnificent Viking Cathedral and its historic winding streets.

## Day 3

Is your chance to explore this fantastic, ancient island; a land of contrasts where fertile green pastures are fringed by shores of golden sands washed by waters of the North Sea and Atlantic ocean. You will visit the 5000 year old village of Skara Brae (older than the Pyramids of Egypt!), the mystical prehistoric stone circle at Brodgar and the Druidic standing stones of Stenness.



We stop in Stromness - one of Scotland's most picturesque seaboard villages and then travel onto Maeshowe, where in the 12th century the Vikings left one of the largest collections of





Norse runic inscriptions. Then it's back to Kirkwall for our 2nd night after what is sure to be a memorable day.

#### Day 4

Is a relaxed start to the day, as you leave Orkney and sail the Viking waters back to the mainland. From here you travel the old road right across the very top of Scotland, driving past the stunning Ben Loyal and Ben Hope mountains following the rocky cliffs and stunning golden sand beaches of our northern coastline.

We then visit the far northwest Highlands and the grandeur, expanse and wilderness of the mountains of Assynt before stopping to view the 15th century ruins of Ardvreck Castle. From here we travel to Ullapool, situated at the mouth of Loch Broom, a beautiful whitewashed fishing village where you will spend your next two nights.

You will say goodbye to this group here, and will be collected by your new guide and group on the morning of day six.

#### Day 5

Gives you a free day in Ullapool to do as you please before joining up with your new crew the next day. There are many possibilities available in this lovely town, options for your day include enjoying a day just to relax and absorb the Highland tranquil pace of life whilst browsing the small craft boutiques nestling through the streets of the town.



Alternatively, you could head up Claypool hill for an easy two hour walk offering wonderful views over Loch Broom reaching a maximum height of 900ft. Or for the even more adventurous, add to this walk by completing a three hour circuit returning to the town via Rhiddoroch estate. (Full details of all local walks can be found at the local tourist information centre). There is also a local swimming pool, and a small museum giving an informative narrative about the natural and social history of the area.



## Day 6

Catch the morning ferry from Ullapool for the two hour sail along Loch Broom, past the Summer Isles then out across the Minch to Stornoway – the main town on Lewis and capital of the Outer Hebrides. Look out for dolphins, whales and seabirds during the crossing.

In the afternoon explore the North West coast from the traditional crofting townships to Port of Ness and the very north tip of the island – the Butt of Lewis. From the lighthouse here there is nothing between you and the Americas! Overnight in Stornoway.

## Day 7

Today will be spent exploring some of the prehistoric remains on the island as well as its finest



beaches. The fascinating circular stone fort, or Broch, at Carloway will be our first stop followed by more traditional crofting communities such as Gearrannan and Shawbost. You'll also have the chance to gain an insight into island life at The Blackhouse in Arnol. Then it's on to Callanish with its mysterious ancient stone circle.

In the afternoon you will head for the remote district of Uig with its fine, sandy beaches at Bhaltois, dramatic sea cliffs and rugged hills. This is the wilderness of the Western Isles at its finest. Overnight again in Stornoway.

## Day 8

Travelling south today from the wild moorlands of Lewis to the more mountainous Harris – almost but not quite an island on its own. Famous for the locally produced cloth, Harris Tweed, it is also home to the highest mountains in the Outer Hebrides and the stunning white sands of Luskentyre.

After a morning of exploring South Harris you will stop for lunch in the small port of Tarbet.

Here you will catch the late afternoon ferry to Skye and continue on to the harbour town of Portree, your base for the next two nights.





## Day 9

Today is a flexible day on Skye; and your driver-guide ensures you take a unique route that suits the weather, the local events, and your group's interests. You can travel north to the Trotternish Ridge and beyond. Here you find the geological wonders like Old Man of Storr, Kilt Rock, and the stunning mountain pass of the Quiraing. Or your guide may take you back in time and teach you about the legends and clan culture surrounding the 13th-century home of the Clan MacLeod, Dunvegan Castle. You return from to Portree in the evening.

## Day 10

Departing from Portree the return journey to Edinburgh has many highlights – a visit to Eilean Donan Castle, Fort William and the dramatic scenery and dark history of Glencoe. Lastly, you will travel through the Central Highlands before returning to Edinburgh in the evening.



### Tour inclusions

- Transport in a 16 seat Mercedes mini-coach
- Air conditioning as standard
- Tour accommodation
- The stories and services of an English-speaking driver-guide

### Tour exclusions

- Entry fees to visitor attractions ( payable directly)

**Price for August 2020 Single room in B&B (ensuite): EUR 2320.00**

**Price for August 2020 Single room in 3\* hotel: EUR 2830.00**

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### **B&B En suite**

The showering and toilet facilities are private, and breakfast is included in the price.

Or

### **Hotels**

Hotels have a bar or restaurant and provide evening meals. Breakfast is included in the price.

**Start/Finish:** Edinburgh Bus Station, St Andrew Square, Edinburgh, EH1 3DQ

**Luggage:** You're restricted to **14kg (31lbs)** of luggage per person. This should be one piece of luggage similar to an airline carry-on bag (approximately 55cm x 45cm x 25cm / 22in x 17in x 10in) and a small bag for on-board personal items.

### **Important information**

- This tour combines two of our trips. This means you swap your bus and guide during the journey
- Pack your waterproof clothing and walking shoes

If you wish to **cancel** your booking after our booking confirmation has been issued, you should inform us in writing as soon as possible - the effective date of cancellation will be the date upon which we receive such written notification. In the event of cancellation by you, cancellation charges are payable, as set out below:

- a. cancellation more than 21 days before the tour date: 10% of the tour price;
- b. cancellation less than 21 days before the tour date: 100% of the tour price;
- c. in the event of a 'no show' you will be charged 100% of the tour price.

You are responsible for ensuring that you have all necessary passports, visas and other travel documents and that you are at the correct departure point at the correct time. We cannot accept any responsibility for your failure to do so, nor any costs or expenses incurred as a result of you failing to do so (which will be treated as a cancellation by you). No monies will be refunded for any missed departures or unused services.



The Company reserves the right to refuse to carry any person whose conduct or manner is likely to cause offence or upset to other passengers. The Company also reserves the right to refuse travel to any person who is experiencing medical symptoms likely to cause ill health to others. It is therefore vital that you ensure that you are fit to travel on the departure date.

In either of the cases mentioned above, full cancellation charges shall be applied by the Company and the Company shall have no further liability to that passenger or to any person travelling with them.