

13 DAYS LUXURY BRITISH ISLES CRUISE - LISBON TO DUBLIN

From Portugal's radiant capital, sail north to the remotest edges of the British Isles. White sands and clear waters welcome you to the Isles of Scilly, before the Welsh coast's beautiful cliffs and sea stacks. Encounter Celtic heritage at Iona Abbey, as you head further north to jagged cliffs that shelter puffins. Explore Gulf Stream-warmed gardens and reach the UNESCO-listed outpost of St. Kilda, before visiting the Isle of Man and sailing for Dublin.



ITINERARY

Day 1 - Lisbon, Portugal

A glorious mosaic of beauty, freedom, and authenticity, Portugal's capital is a stirring artwork of a city. Known for the seven hills it spreads across, and its stirring fado music, Lisbon is a pastel-colored blend of houses and beautiful tile artworks - and this creative city strikes a perfect harmony between natural and manmade beauty. Stroll along Alfama's steep, cobbled streets as you explore one of the city's oldest neighborhoods -



where each house and door could be its own photograph. Look for the decorative tiles, with the distinctive blues and whites of Azulejo ceramics, and visit the dedicated museum to learn more. Afterward, wind up to Sao Jorge Castle, where views out across Lisbon's red rooftops unravel. Just one of many majestic viewpoints, you can also seek out Miradouro da Graça for perhaps Lisbon's finest panorama, with the copper-colored suspension bridge stretching over sparkling water beyond the sea of buildings. The elegant Tower of Belem rises in the Tagus estuary and is a historic defender of these shores. The grand, carved cloisters of Jeronimos Monastery spread out close by, and there's another UNESCO-recognized location close by at Sintra, where a colorful town is set amid thick gardens and towering mountains - capped by the royal Pena Palace. Later, relax and take a quick break to drink Ginjinha, a cherry liqueur made from chocolate cups instead of coffee. Lisboetas have a sweet tooth, and the famous Pastel de Nata's crumbling pastry and caramelized custard topping is the essential accompaniment to any coffee stop.

Days 2 - 3 - Day at sea

Days at sea are the perfect opportunity to relax, unwind, and catch up with what you've been meaning to do. So whether that is going to the gym, visiting the spa, whale-watching, catching up on your reading, or simply topping up your tan, these blue sea days are the perfect balance to busy days spent exploring shoreside.

Day 4 - Tresco, Isles of Scilly, United Kingdom & St Mary's (Isles of Scilly), United Kingdom

For many visitors Tresco is the most attractive of the Isles of Scilly. This is especially due to its Abbey Garden, which is home to thousands of exotic plant species from around 80 different countries. Plant collector Augustus Smith began the gardens in the 1830s on the site of an old Benedictine Abbey by channeling the weather up and over a network of walled enclosures built around the Priory ruins. He had three terraces carved from the rocky south slope and maximized Tresco's mild Gulf Stream climate. Even in mid-winter there still are hundreds of plants flowering here. Another surprising attraction at the Abbey Garden is the collection of figureheads from ships that wrecked among the Isles of Scilly.

Scattered 30 miles offshore from England's most south-westerly point - Land's End - the Isles of Scilly are home to rich wildlife, and green land sloping to powdery white beaches. The Isles of Scilly's biggest island harbors around 1,600 people - roughly three-quarters of the total population - and is one of five occupied islands. Isolated and serene, life here hums along at its own pace in this archipelago's bubble, which enjoys the UK's mildest climate, and some of its most spectacular beaches. Hugh Town is the center of St Mary's, and you'll be warmly welcomed by the incredibly tight-knit local community. A peaceful place, watch out when the waters are suddenly parted by the competition of gig racing - the island's sporting pride and joy - which sees teams competing in colorful rowboats. Elsewhere, catch sight of Atlantic seals and seabirds like puffins and fulmars, along nine miles of coastline. You can also spot the ghostly shipwrecks strewn around the island's waters, and the 140 islands and skerries that have made treacherous sailing historically. There's a dense collection of historical sites that belies the islands's small size - from a former prime minister's grave to star-shaped fortresses. Tresco Abbey Garden is one of the UK's most vibrant gardens, with diverse plants bathing in the



warmer climate and over 300 species on display. Taste the rewards of the mild weather with a glass of wine from England's most south-westerly vineyard.

Day 5 - Pembrokeshire National Park, United Kingdom

Tresco, Isles of Scilly

Day 6 - Belfast , United Kingdom

Reborn as a cool, modern city, Belfast has successfully left its troubles behind, emerging as a hotbed of culture and architecture, where the comfort of a cozy pub is never far away. Take a voyage of discovery in its maritime quarter, home to a celebrated museum dedicated to the most famous ship ever built, which was constructed right here in the city's shipyards. A walk across the Lagan Weir Footbridge brings you to Belfast's fascinating Titanic District - an area of the city devoted to its rich shipbuilding heritage. The state-of-the-art Titanic Museum brings the story of the doomed vessel to life and is the largest museum dedicated to the infamously 'unsinkable' ship. Wind up a nautical-themed ramble along the Maritime Mile with a visit to SS Nomadic, the smaller cousin of the Titanic, and a ship that serves as a fascinating time capsule back to the pomp and grandeur of the Titanic, while also telling its own stories of service in both World Wars. There is just enough time to give the 10-meter-long Salmon of Knowledge sculpture a quick peck for luck, before continuing to explore. A stark barbed wire and graffitied sheet metal barrier mark an abrupt scar through the city's residential areas. The Peace Line was constructed during the height of the Troubles, when Belfast was plagued by sectarian divisions between Protestants and Catholics. Nowadays, you can jump in a black taxi tour to see the colorful murals and living history of the walls, which stand as a stark reminder of the fragility of peace. After exploring the city's historic divisions, a reminder of Belfast's uniting creativity can be found at the Metropolitan Arts Centre - a seven-story tall building, which invites light to gloriously cascade inside. The Cathedral Quarter is a cobbled blend of flower-adorned pubs, restaurants, and theaters, and venues where music spills out onto the streets at night, and many a pint is cheerily shared.

Day 7 - Iona, United Kingdom & Lunga, United Kingdom

If tiny islands that resonate with peace and tranquility are your idea of travel heaven, then welcome to Iona. Almost 200 miles east of Edinburgh, set in Scotland's Inner Hebrides, this magical island has a spiritual reputation that precedes it. And luckily, more than lives up to. The island is miniscule. Just three miles long and only one and a half miles wide, this is not a place that hums with urban attractions. 120 people call Iona home (this number rises significantly if the gull, tern, and Kittiwake population is added), although residential numbers do go up (to a whopping 175) in summer. The beautiful coastline is lapped by the gulf stream and gives the island a warm climate with sandy beaches that look more Mediterranean than Scottish! Add to that a green field landscape that is just beautiful, and you'll find that Iona is a place that stays with you long after you leave. Iona's main attraction is of course its abbey. Built in 563 by Saint Columbia and his monks, the abbey is the reason why Iona is called the cradle of Christianity. Not only is the abbey (today an ecumenical church) one of the best - if not the best - examples of ecclesiastical architecture dating from the Middle Ages, but it also serves as an important site of spiritual pilgrimage. St. Martin's Cross, a 9th-century Celtic cross that stands outside the abbey, is considered as the finest example of Celtic crosses in the British Isles. Reilig Odhrain, or the cemetery, allegedly contains the remains of many Scottish



kings.

The stunning Isle of Lunga is the largest island in the Treshnish archipelago. With volcanic origin the isle was populated until the 19th Century, and remains of black houses can be seen around this magnificent coastal jewel. Abundant plant life and exotic birdlife are now the main inhabitants of the area. Fortunate visitors may view the magnificent array of birds, especially the great puffins that breed on the island's plateau from mid-April till early August. By late summer, Lunga transforms into a quiet and peaceful haven after the busy seabird breeding season. While the iconic puffins and most nesting birds have returned to the open ocean, the island still offers dramatic coastal scenery, wildflower-covered slopes, and a strong sense of remote Hebridean beauty. Guests may encounter seals hauled out on rocky shores, and birds of prey are sometimes seen overhead, adding to the wild charm of the landscape.

Day 8 - Shiant Islands, Scotland, United Kingdom & Loch Ewe, United Kingdom

Cliffs of tall hexagonal columns create a sensational landscape at the Shiant Islands, especially when viewed from the sea. The cliffs of six-sided rock columns look like the cross-section of an enormous honeycomb. The rock formations were formed when molten volcanic magma cooled very slowly underground. Millions of years of erosion have exposed the six-sided columns to the sea, and to us. The tallest of these formations is 120 meters (390 feet) high. During spring and summer, flights of seabirds near the Shiant Islands catch the eye. Many long-winged seabirds wheel and soar gracefully. Others are more shaped for underwater swimming and fly in direct lines, beating stubby wings to resemble flying potatoes. Some birds nest in burrows while others, like Black-legged Kittiwakes, nest on cliffs. Rather than build nests, guillemots lay eggs on bare rock ledges. The pointed shape of the eggs ensures they roll in a tight circle, not off the ledge to the sea below. The Shiant Islands are part of the Outer Hebrides and located between the Isles of Lewis and Skye. Historically, they have supported families of sheep grazers who could tolerate a lonely island outpost. The Shiants were known as the last place in Britain where the Black Rat occurred in substantial numbers. Originally introduced to Britain from Asia in Roman times these rodents caused problems, eating eggs and chicks of seabirds. A successful eradication program eliminated the rats in 2016, giving the seabird colonies well-earned peace.

Loch Ewe is the only north-facing loch in Scotland. With a fascinating history and stunning scenic landscape, this area overflows with natural beauty. During World War II, the loch served as a convoy gathering point and had a strong naval presence. It was therefore protected by light and heavy anti-aircraft guns, a boom net, and a mine defense system to shield this vital settlement. Loch Ewe is a natural deep-water sea loch that connects to the Atlantic Ocean through a relatively narrow mouth, offering it a vast amount of protection from the weather. Nearby, Inverewe Gardens thrive on the warm currents of the North Atlantic Drift, creating an oasis of color and fertility. Exotic plants from many countries flourish here - on a latitude more northerly than Moscow, giving an almost continual display of color throughout the year.

Day 9 - St. Kilda, United Kingdom & Boreray Island cruising, United Kingdom



Gloriously remote, St. Kilda is an archipelago 50 miles off the Isle of Harris. Although the four islands are uninhabited by humans, thousands of seas birds call these craggy cliffs home, clinging to the sheer faces as if by magic. Not only is St. Kilda home to the UK's largest colony of Atlantic Puffin (almost 1 million), but also the world largest colony Gannets nests on Boreray island and its sea stacks. The islands also home decedents of the world's original Soay sheep as well as having a breed of eponymously named mice. The extremely rare St. Kilda wren unsurprisingly hails from St. Kilda, so birders should visit with notebook, binoculars and camera to hand. While endemic animal species is rife on the island, St. Kilda has not been peopled since 1930 after the last inhabitants voted that human life was unsustainable. However, permanent habitation had been possible in the Medieval Ages, and a vast National Trust for Scotland project to restore the dwellings is currently being undertaken. The islands even enjoyed a status as being an ideal holiday destination in the 19th century. Today, the only humans living on the islands are passionate history, science and conservation scholars. One of the caretakers even acts as shopkeeper and postmaster for any visitors who might like to send a postcard home from St. Kilda. It should be noted that St. Kilda is the UKs only (and just one of 39 in the world) dual World Heritage status from UNESCO in recognition of its Natural Heritage and cultural significance.

Erupting out of the Atlantic waters like a mythical beast, Boreray Island captivates all those who lay eyes upon it. As we approach, listen out for sharp intakes of breath - the abrasive and immense form of this staggering island never fails to astound. Few locations command such awe as uninhabited Boreray, left to the seabirds since the last residents of the St Kilda Islands departed in 1930. Watch as vast numbers of Northern Gannets glide overhead before attempting skillful landings at tucked-away nest sites or plunge into the sea, seeking food for their new chicks. Northern Fulmars also make their homes on the volcanic cliffs, while Atlantic Puffins dart in and out of burrows on the slopes. The rugged, rocky island is also well known for the hardy sheep who cling to its shores. You might be able to pick out the rare Boreray Sheep, unique to the island, grazing on the hilly slopes as we cruise alongside the island and the attendant rock stacks that stand tall against the Atlantic onslaught. Boreray forms a part of the dramatic St Kilda World Heritage Site and is a rare example of a site recognized for both its outstanding natural and cultural values.

Day 10 - Tobermory, Isle of Mull, United Kingdom & Duart, Isle of Mull, Hebrides, United Kingdom

A bold splash of seafront color, bright against the emerald-green backdrop, welcomes you to this dreamy island. You'll receive a welcome to remember from the beaming cafes, houses, and shops that line Tobermory's picturesque harbor to salute your arrival. Located in the rugged Scottish Inner Hebrides, Tobermory is the capital of the Isle of Mull. You might even recognize the town's vibrantly painted buildings - their charming exteriors have appeared in countless TV shows, most notably the beloved children's series Balamory. Just like in the show, there's always a new story to discover here - not least the legend that a sunken Spanish galleon, rumored to be brimming with lost gold, lies just below the waves that ripple through the harbor. Learn more about the area's history at the Mull Museum, or head out on a boat tour to enjoy some of the incredible wildlife watching on offer. Spot majestic birds like white-tailed and golden eagles soaring overhead, or keep an eye on the water - friendly



dolphins and Minke whales are frequent visitors. Before you leave, treat yourself to a taste of one of the island's finest exports with a visit to the Tobermory Distillery for a whiskey tasting. Established in 1798, it's one of Scotland's oldest and most flavorful distilleries.

An ancient stone castle on a remote rugged landscape evokes all sorts of fantasies, especially when approached from the sea. You can imagine mythical, romantic, or historic tales as you approach or explore the Duart Castle on the Isle of Mull. The true stories may be just as good.

The Isle of Mull is the second largest of the islands of the Inner Hebrides, after the Isle of Skye. The island has a mountainous core and several radiating promontories covered in moorland. On one headland jutting into the Sound of Mull sits Duart Castle. It was originally built in the 13th century and soon became the ancestral home of the Clan Maclean. Control and ownership of the castle have changed hands over the centuries as broader conflicts for the Isle of Mull and Scotland played out. It was a ruin when the Maclean clan regained control by purchasing and restoring the castle in 1911. It is clan home for all the descendants of the family of Maclean spread throughout the world.

There are stories of wrecks and treasure in the waters near Duart. The most evocative must be the wreck of a Spanish galleon in Tobermony Bay. This ship was part of the Spanish Armada defeated by the English fleet and Atlantic storms, and the crew was taken to Duart Castle. The galleon is rumored to have a treasure of gold bullion still waiting to be found. Zodiac travel may reveal other treasures. Mull is known for its European Otters and the majestic White-tailed Sea Eagle which has successfully re-colonised Mull after a long absence.

Day 11 - Fort William, Scotland, United Kingdom

Flanked by the UK's tallest mountain on one side and Loch Linnae on the other, Fort William - or "Bill" to the locals - is what you imagine when it comes to Scottish Highland towns. Verdant moors stretch as far as the eye can see, pastel painted houses front the water and it is not unusual to see pipers in kilts on street corners. But while Fort William may play to certain critics' idea of a cliche, the pretty town goes far beyond tartan cushions and wee drams of Scotch (although there is a fair amount of this too!). Fort William has everything you could possibly want while in the Highlands. The High Street has plenty to keep you occupied with its good range of shops, cafes and restaurants - a lunch of locally caught seafood or the iconic haggis, neeps and tatties is a must. Because of its privileged location sitting in the shadow of the mighty Ben Nevis (standing a proud 1,345 metres high) outdoor enthusiasts are especially well catered for. Unsurprisingly so, as Fort William is considered the UK's outdoor capital. But it's not all high adrenaline sports. Certainly, those who want to climb up a rock or hurtle down white water rapids will find their nirvana, but if gentle fishing, a quiet county walk or curling up in cosy pubs warmed by an open fire are more your glass of whiskey then you're catered for. The West Highland Museum in the centre of the town is excellent, while St Andrew's Church, towards the north end of the main street, has a very attractive interior. Also well worth a look is St Mary's Catholic Church, on Belford Road, and no visit should be considered complete without a look at the Old Fort, almost invisible to passing traffic. Add a wildlife cruise amid stunning scenery and



the steam train that took Harry to Hogwarts and you can easily spend a day in this lovely port.

Day 12 - Isle of Man (Douglas), United Kingdom

The Isle of Man, off England's west coast (and Ireland's east), needs no introduction. Its Celtic history is legendary, its political past labyrinthine, and its national symbol - a three-legged figure with neither body nor head - an enigma that has been foxing historians for centuries. Do not confuse the Isle of Man with the United Kingdom. It does have 'crown dependency' similar to Jersey, but the 32-mile-long island is entirely self-governed. It changed hands between England and Scotland many times during the middle ages but fell under British rule in 1399. However, when the feudal lordship was revived in 1765, the island never became part of the United Kingdom. And has remained independent ever since. The island is, quite literally, shrouded in a cloak of secrecy. This is called Manannan's (or sea mist) after the obscure Celtic Sea God. Legend has it that Manannan's cloak hides the island from invaders, so they just sail past. But that's just the beginning of the island's eccentricities. If you do not salute the mooinjer veggey (little people) that live under Fairy Bridge, you will provoke their anger, and they will put a spell on you. The island's national sport is tin bath racing. Modern life seems not to have arrived here. The railway system, the actual railway system not a contrived tourist attraction, is still operated by a steam locomotive. The tram system by horse-drawn carriage. The water wheel, opened in 1895, has never been updated. After all, why would they? Everything works just fine.

Day 13 - Dublin, Ireland

Atmospheric cobbled streets, with buskers scraping fiddles and characterful pubs inviting passersby inside, is Dublin in a snapshot. A city of irrepressible energy and lust for life, Ireland's capital is as welcoming a place as you'll find. Horse-drawn carriages plod along cobbled centuries-old streets, blending with an easy-going, cosmopolitan outlook. Known for its fun-filled gathering of pubs, any excuse works to enjoy a celebratory toast and chat among good company. Home to perhaps the world's most famous beer - slurp perfect pourings of thick, dark Guinness - cranked out for the city's thirsty patrons. Learn more about the humble pint's journey at the Guinness Storehouse. Dublin has come a long way since the Vikings established a trading port here, back in the 9th Century. In the time since, the city became the British Empire's de facto second city, and the Georgian imprint still adds oodles of historic character. Learn of 1916's Easter Uprising, when the Irish rebelled and established their independence here, as you visit the infamous, haunting Kilmainham Gaol. The uprising's leaders were tried and executed in these dark confines. Dublin's St. Patrick's Cathedral has immense history below its steep spire, which dates back to 1191. There's rich literary heritage to leaf through too, and the city's streets were rendered vividly in James Joyce's classic Ulysses. The Museum of Literature celebrates the full scope of Dublin's lyrical talents. Trinity College also has a prestigious roll-call of alumni - visit to see the Book of Kells, a beautifully illustrated bible of the medieval era.

Please Note:

Itineraries are subject to change.



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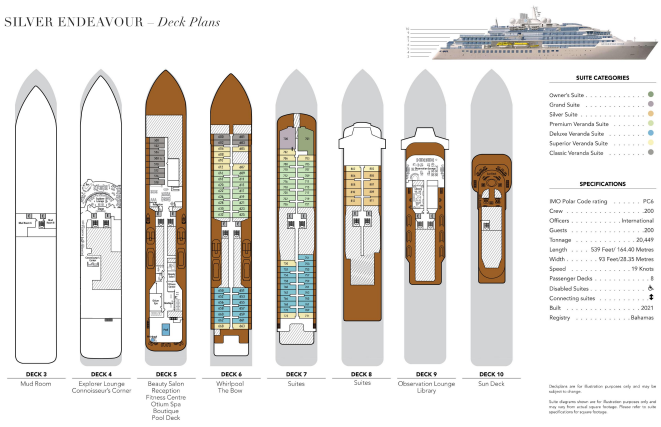
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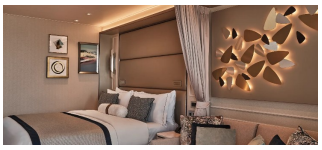
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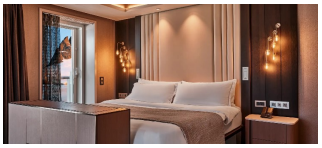
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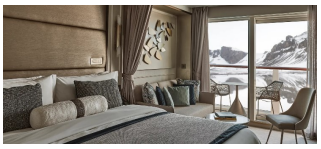
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Superior Veranda





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