

ANCIENT ISLES: ENGLAND, IRELAND & SCOTLAND CRUISE

Uncover the hidden side of well-known isles on a journey that encompasses Britain, Ireland, and Scotland. Enter coastal villages by Zodiac and land on remote beaches. Witness prehistory juxtaposed with the present, probe the secrets of Stone Age megaliths, and discover early Christian settlements, Navigate through a picturesque sea cave, and observe colonies of migratory seabirds. Stroll charming, remote towns and mingle with locals in cozy pubs throughout the land.



ITINERARY

DAY 1 London, England / Portsmouth / Embark Ship

Arrive in London, the capital of England and the United Kingdom, and transfer to Portsmouth to embark the ship on your journey around the British and Irish Isles.

DAY 2 Fowey

Arrive in the Cornish port of Fowey (pronounced "Foy") this afternoon. Visit the Eden Project, a collection of immense eco-garden biomes set within a 34-acre bowl--celebrating sustainability and botanical innovation. Alternatively, experience



the grandeur of the Estates of Cornwall on a visit to the houses of Pencarrow and Lanhydrock. For those wishing for a more relaxed afternoon, spend time on your own in the village of Fowey or join the field staff for an expeditionary outing in the area.

DAY 3 Isles of Scilly

Revel in flourishing subtropical beauty at Tresco Abbey Garden, planted in the 19th century around the ruins of a Benedictine abbey in the Isles of Scilly. Today, it's matured into a priceless botanical sanctuary for thousands of exotic species from across the southern hemisphere--from Brazil to New Zealand, Myanmar to South Africa. Yet here it is, on an islet just 28 miles off the Cornwall coast.

DAY 4 Cobh, Ireland

Arrive in this colorful port city on one of the world's largest natural harbors, intimately tied to maritime history and the great Irish Emigration. Visit the Cobh Heritage Centre and learn about the momentous events that took place here--from the 1912 departure of the Titanic to the successful rescue of passengers from the torpedoed Lusitania and the millions of Irish who departed these shores in search of a better life. Enjoy an afternoon of Irish traditions, from music to sport, with locals.

DAYS 5-6 Wild West Coast of Ireland

Over the next two days, enjoy the windswept landscapes of western Ireland. Be on deck as we sail past Skellig Michael, the protected Celtic Christian hermitage where beehive huts and remains of a seventh-century monastery still stand. Then, get photo tips from our National Geographic Photography Expert as we sail past the uninhabited Blasket Islands, on which you'll observe a wide array of birds including storm petrels, shearwaters, terns, gulls, and auks. Our exploration continues on land through the southern corner of Ireland with its cozy local pubs, cultural centers, and country walks.

DAY 7 Iona and Staffa, Inner Hebrides, Scotland

Visit the sacred island of Iona and its 13th-century abbey, long revered as a Christian pilgrimage site and believed to be where the Book of Kells originated. Several Scottish kings, including the actual Macbeth, are buried in the royal graveyard here. Later, weather permitting, we explore uninhabited Staffa Island, famed for its perfect six-sided volcanic basalt columns and dramatic Fingal's Cave. On Staffa, join one of our naturalists to learn about and observe a large puffin colony.

DAY 8 Outer Hebrides

Explore the Outer Hebrides of Scotland, boasting incredible seabird colonies. Conditions permitting, we make a landing at St. Kilda, a UNESCO World Heritage site and nature preserve. Uninhabited since 1930, the traditional stone village left behind by the island's final residents now lies in ruins. But active occupants do remain: a huge population of gannets, domesticated sheep now gone wild, puffins, and wrens.



DAY 9 Shetland Islands

The Shetlands are characterized by deep-seated cultural traditions and dramatic landscapes. Far north and near enough to Norway to speak Scottish with a Scandinavian accent, this 100-island archipelago has never been fully tamed by those who live here. Explore these rural islands with their mix of ponies, ruins, and windswept pastures.

DAY 10 Orkney Islands

Options this morning include a birdwatching trek in quest of Orkney's remarkably varied birdlife or a walking tour of Kirkwall, Orkney's capital and a showplace of ancient Viking history thanks to its proximity to Norway. Later, discover the Stone Age megaliths of the Ring of Brodgar and the 5,000-year-old stone slab village of Skara Brae. And step inside majestic St. Magnus Cathedral, a sandstone landmark that took three centuries to build.

DAY 11 Aberdeen

Start off the day with a panoramic drive through "the Granite City" before exploring Aberdeenshire's countryside. Choose to visit a local Highland cattle farm where you will learn about its award-winning products and practices. Or, dive into Highland traditions with a visit to the Gordon Highlanders Museum. Transfer back to the ship later this afternoon and enjoy your last evening at sea.

DAY 12 Edinburgh / Disembark Ship

Disembark in Edinburgh after breakfast and transfer to the airport for your flight home. Or choose to explore the Scottish Highlands on a post-voyage extension.

Please Note:

All day-by-day breakdowns are a sampling of the places we intend to visit, conditions permitting.



YOUR SHIP: NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC EXPLORER

YOUR SHIP:	**National Geographic Explorer**
VESSEL TYPE:	**Luxury Expedition**
LENGTH:	**108 meters**
PASSENGER CAPACITY:	**148 (single & twin cabins)**
BUILT/REFURBISHED:	**1982 / 2008**

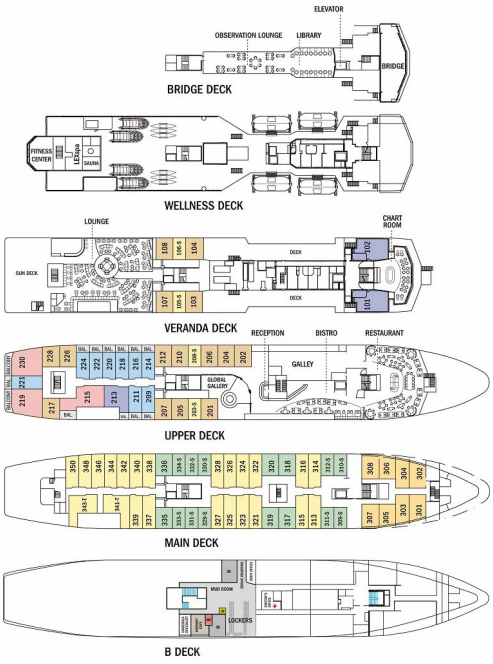
National Geographic Explorer is a state-of-the-art expedition ship. It is a fully stabilized, ice-class vessel, enabling it to navigate polar passages while providing exceptional comfort. It carries kayaks and a fleet of Zodiac landing craft. An Undersea Specialist operates a remotely operated vehicle (ROV) and sophisticated video equipment, extending access to the underwater world. Public areas : Bistro Bar; Chart Room; Restaurant; Global Gallery; Library, Lounge with full service bar and state-of-the-art facilities for films, slideshows and presentations; Mud Room with lockers for expedition gear, and Observation Lounge. Our "Open Bridge" provides guests an opportunity to meet our Officers and Captain and learn about navigation. Meals : Served in single seatings with unassigned tables for an informal atmosphere and easy mingling. Menu is international with local flair. Cabins : All cabins face outside with windows or portholes, private facilities and climate controls. Expedition Equipment : Zodiac landing craft, kayaks, Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV), hydrophone, SplashCam, underwater video camera, Crow's Nest remote controlled camera, video microscope, snorkeling gear. Special Features : A full-time doctor, Undersea Specialist, LEX Photo Specialist and Video Chronicler, Internet Cafe and laundry. Wellness : The vessel is staffed by two Wellness Specialists and features a glass enclosed Fitness Center, outdoor stretching area, two LEXspa treatment rooms



and Sauna.



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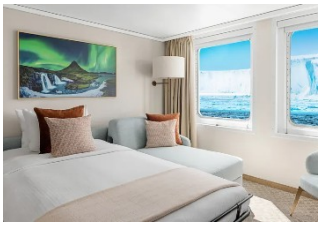
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Category 05



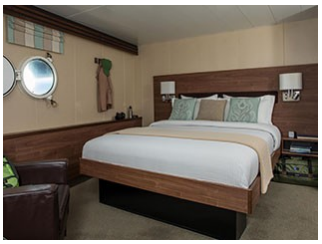
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