



The Small Cruise  
Ship Collection

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## CELTIC ISLAND ODYSSEY - A VOYAGE FROM ABERDEEN TO LIVERPOOL

This expedition voyage will appeal to those who wish to visit some of the most remote and inaccessible islands in Scotland as well as Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man. This is not a cruise in the traditional sense, more an exploration with 100 or so fellow travellers who wish to enjoy the peace, beauty and tranquillity of the islands and to learn about the history of the region. The sheer diversity of the landscapes and lifestyles will amaze you as will the spirit and warmth of the small communities we will encounter. Our summer voyage aboard the MS Island Sky offers the opportunity to discover the islands off the northern coast of Scotland, venturing as far north as the Shetland Islands in addition to the magical Inner and Outer islands of the Hebrides. In addition, we will call into Rathlin Island which, just off the tip of Northern Ireland, is steeped in history and has an abundance of seabirds and to the mystical Isle of Man where a strong Norse tradition thrives. We will visit both inhabited and uninhabited islands and places of great natural beauty rich in birdlife, wildlife and mystical history, many with a long history dating back to the Iron Age. Such a trip would be almost impossible to arrange independently but with the MS Island Sky as our base we have the advantage of being able to reach these remote islands and, with the use of Zodiacs, we will be able to explore in small groups. We will witness vibrant colours, explore deserted villages and learn of the history and ancient culture of unique island life. Whether your interest lies in the natural world, history or bird watching, or simply being there to witness the timeless beauty of the islands, this trip will lift the spirits and gladden the heart.



### ITINERARY

Day 1 Aberdeen, Scotland.

Embark the MS Island Sky this afternoon. Transfers will be provided from Aberdeen International Airport and Aberdeen Railway Station at a fixed time. Enjoy welcome drinks and dinner



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this evening as we sail.

### Day 2 Fair Isle.

After a morning at sea we anchor off the remote island of Fair Isle in the early afternoon. Located midway between the Shetland and Orkney Islands, the tiny population of sixty or so islanders always extend us a warm welcome. Enjoy a walk across the island searching out the puffin slopes, visit the community hall for a cup of tea or maybe purchase some of the famous knitwear.

### Day 3 Lerwick.

From the Shetland capital we will visit the remarkable archaeological site of Jarlshof. The site was uncovered by a violent storm in the winter of 1896/7, revealing an extraordinary settlement site embracing at least 5,000 years of human history. The site contains a remarkable sequence of stone structures - late Neolithic houses, a Bronze-Age village, an Iron-Age broch and wheelhouses, several Norse longhouse, a Medieval farmstead and the 16th century laird's house. Return to the ship for lunch and enjoy a free afternoon to explore this historic port. Tonight we will be entertained by local musicians.

### Day 4 Foula & Papa Stour.

This morning we visit Foula, one of Britain's most remote inhabited islands. Apart from a narrow coastal strip of more fertile croftland, Foula is an expanse of peat and moorland rising

steeply to five dramatic peaks. In the early summer Foula's wildflowers provide a glorious burst of colour. Translated as "Bird Island" from Old Norse, the island is designated as a Special Protection Area for birds and is home to the world's largest colony of great skuas, known locally as bonxies, which compete fiercely with Arctic skuas for breeding territories. Kittiwakes and Arctic terns return annually to nest whilst the cliffs teem with puffins, shags and fulmars. Over lunch we will sail the short distance to Papa Stour where we will use our Zodiacs to explore the stunning cliff scenery, sea stacks, arches, blowholes and coastal caves.

### Day 5 Stornoway, Isle of Lewis.

Spend the morning cruising to the Outer Hebrides and the Isle of Lewis. On leaving the island capital of Stornoway, we will head across the island of Lewis to the beautiful west coast. Described as Scotland's Stonehenge, the Callanish Standing Stones date from around 3000 BC. There are a total of 32 stones in a circular and avenue design. The stones stand like a petrified forest on the flat top of a peninsula which reaches out into East Loch Roag. We also visit the Dun Carloway Pictish Broch, probably built sometime in the last century BC it would have served as an occasionally defensible residence for an extended family complete with accommodation for animals at ground floor level. Our next stop is the Gearranan Blackhouse Village, a reconstructed settlement of traditional black houses which were made using dry stone masonry and have thatched roofs, distinctively weighted down with rocks. Visit the small museum, enjoy a display of a typical crofting activity such as weaving and take in the views of this dramatic site on the wild Atlantic coast.



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### Day 6 St Kilda & Stac Lee, Outer Hebrides.

Arrive over breakfast at St Kilda, a remarkable uninhabited archipelago some fifty miles beyond the Outer Hebrides. Dominated by the highest cliffs and sea stacks in Britain, Hirta, St Kilda's main island was occupied on and off for at least two thousand years, with the last 36 Gaelic speaking inhabitants evacuated at their own request in 1930. Immediately after the evacuation, the island was bought by the Marquess of Bute to protect the island's thousands of seabirds including puffin and fulmars, and in 1957 it was bequeathed to The National Trust for Scotland. St Kilda is one of only a few UNESCO World Heritage Sites with dual status reflecting its natural and cultural significance. The local ranger will join us on board before our expedition staff lead a number of guided walks on the island. This afternoon we will cruise past two of the largest gannetries in the world at Stac Lee and Stac an Armin. These impressive stacs rise 170 metres from the sea and are home to up to 60,000 breeding pairs of northern gannets.

### Day 7 Dunvegan & Loch Scavaig, Isle of Skye.

Spend the day exploring the Isle of Skye. From our anchorage in Loch Harport we make our way to the MacLeod stronghold of Dunvegan Castle. Remarkably, the castle has been almost continuously occupied by the MacLeods for nearly eight centuries. Discover the castle, a fascinating place that contains work from at least ten building periods, before we explore the gardens, following paths through woodland glades past pools and burns fed by a waterfall. The formal gardens were laid out in the 18th century and make a wonderful contrast to the

moorland hills and sea. Also keep a look out for the seal colony on the adjoining rocks. Alternatively, spend the morning at leisure in the town of Carbost or make a visit to the Talisker whisky distillery. Sail over lunch to lovely Loch Scavaig. Just beyond is the freshwater Loch Corruisk with its breathtakingly beautiful view over the Cuillins. This is great walking country, but for those who prefer a less energetic afternoon our Zodiacs will explore the coast looking out for seals.

### Day 8 Staffa & Iona, Inner Hebrides.

Awake this morning at Staffa, the south side where the perpendicular rock face features an imposing series of black basalt columns, known as the Colonnade, which has been cut by the sea into cathedral-like caverns, most notably Fingal's Cave. Weather permitting, we will use our Zodiacs to explore closer. Later this morning we sail to Iona which has been occupied for thousands of years and has been a place of pilgrimage and Christian worship for several centuries. It was to this flat, Hebridean island that St Columba fled from Ireland in 563 and established a monastery. Here his followers were responsible for the conversion of much of pagan Scotland and Northern England. No less than 62 Scottish Kings are buried in the Abbey. Visit the Abbey or perhaps walk along the white sandy beaches or go in search of the corncrake amongst the irises.

### Day 9 Rathlin Island, Northern Ireland.

Located just a few miles from the North Antrim coast, Rathlin has been settled for more than 6,000 years. Today, there are



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only 80 or so souls, whereas before the famine there were 1,200 inhabitants. History is everywhere with historic buildings and ruins which we will explore on foot with our local guides. We may also see some of the prolific seabird life with astonishing numbers of auks, kittiwakes as well as grey seals.

Itineraries are subject to change.

### Day 10 Peel, Isle of Man.

Arrive this morning on the Isle of Man at the main fishing port of Peel. Settlements have been here since the Mesolithic Age and the island also claims to have the longest continuous parliament which was founded in 979 AD. Leaving Peel we will visit Tynwald Hill, located in the little village of St John's. This grass-topped, tiered hill is made from the soil and stones from each of the island's 17 parishes and is the point from which, each 5th of July, all the laws enacted in the year preceding are promulgated to the gathered government officials and the public at large, both in Manx and English languages. Continue to Castletown where we board the vintage steam train for a delightful and traditional journey to Douglas. Dating from 1874, the Isle of Man Steam Railway is the island's oldest Victorian rail system and this narrow gauge railway still runs with its original locomotives and carriages. Return to the ship for lunch and a free afternoon to explore Peel at your own pace.

### Day 11 Liverpool.

Disembark this morning. Transfers will be provided to Liverpool Lime Street Station at a fixed time.

Please note:



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## YOUR SHIP: ISLAND SKY

**YOUR SHIP:** Island Sky

**VESSEL TYPE:**

**LENGTH:**

**PASSENGER CAPACITY:**

**BUILT/REFURBISHED:**

With a maximum passenger capacity of only 116, a vessel of her size is capable of carrying many more but instead the MS Island Sky has the benefit of unusually large suites, luxuriously appointed public areas and spacious outside decks. There is a high ratio of crew to passengers- the friendly crew of 75 crew and Scandinavian captains are experienced mariners, having been in service aboard large 2000 plus passenger vessels and who now prefer a less frantic life aboard a small ship. If, like them and us, you prefer a more peaceful life at sea, you will find the MS Island Sky the perfect ship. When choosing the vessel for your next voyage of discovery, you can select a ship with endless entertainment and impersonal service or come with us where peace, high quality service and attention to detail are the order of the day. We promise there will be no organised entertainment, fancy dress, deck games or any of the usual big ship experiences. The atmosphere on board is more akin to a private yacht or country hotel. A little music in the lounge or bar after dinner, guest speakers, informative port briefings from our cruise director and of course good food which may be enjoyed leisurely in the attractive dining room. After a day ashore you will return to the comfort and peace of a well run and exceedingly

comfortable ship. Your Suite Onboard there are 57 exceptionally spacious and well designed suites. All feature a sitting room area and some have private balconies. The feeling of luxury is enhanced by the wood panelling and brass, which predominates throughout the vessel conveying the atmosphere of a private yacht. The passenger accommodation is arranged over five decks and all suites have outside views. Each affords considerable comfort with en-suite bathroom featuring marble-topped vanity unit with sink and walk-in shower, large wardrobes, dressing table with large mirror and stool and excellent storage. There is a mini-fridge, flat screen television with inbuilt DVD player which can also play CDs and a telephone in each suite. Bottled water, towelling dressing gowns and slippers are also provided for your comfort. Other facilities include a programmable electronic safe, hairdryer, assorted toiletries and individually controlled air-conditioning and heating. The suites on each deck have their own colour theme. Soft hues and blended tones enhance the traditional maritime style making the passenger accommodation an inviting and relaxing place to be. Your Space The spacious and finely decorated public rooms include a large lounge where daily briefings and talks will be provided throughout the voyage and an elegant bar where a pianist plays periodically throughout the day. The bar also features a 24-hour tea and coffee station. The onboard library is the perfect place to relax with a book and is stocked with reference books pertaining to the places the vessel is visiting along with a selection of games and two computers with internet access. Daily newspapers and magazines are also placed in the library depending on local availability. There is



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also WI-FI access throughout the vessel. Outside there is a rear sun deck where meals are served in warm weather under shade, a bar and comfortable deck furniture for sun bathing or relaxing with a book. On the top deck there is a Jacuzzi and further observation and sun deck. There is also a small hairdressers on board with appointments made on request. Your Dining Another benefit of a small ship is the quality of the cuisine. With only one sitting and a maximum of just over 100 passengers, the galley is able to provide delicious meals. Where possible and when it meets his high standards, the chef will obtain local produce in markets or buy the catch of the day from a passing fishing boat. Such purchases enhance the well stocked larders and bring a local touch to the



varied menus.



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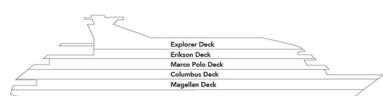
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## INSIDE YOUR SHIP



Explorer Deck



Erikson Deck



Marco Polo Deck



Columbus Deck



Magellan Deck



Standard Suites   Corner Suites with Deck Access   Owner's Balcony Suites  
Superior Suites   Deluxe Balcony Suites   Island Suite  
Premium Suites with Deck Access



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## PRICING

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