



The Small Cruise  
Ship Collection

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## SCOTLAND IN DEPTH WITH WILD EARTH TRAVEL

Explore Scotland's heartland harbours, villages and islands. It's history of ages past, whilst making your own history viewing brochs, standing stones and castles. Isles where the wildlife is in abundance. A land where the people are waiting to welcome you to their unique culture – a culture which may reflect threads of your own heritage. Check out the highlights from our 2018 tour here; [www.wildearth-travel.com/highlights-from-our-Scotland-in-Depth-2018-trip/](http://www.wildearth-travel.com/highlights-from-our-Scotland-in-Depth-2018-trip/)



### ITINERARY

DAY 1: FRIDAY 12 MAY - GLASGOW

We start our Scotland In-depth voyage in Glasgow, Scotland's largest city, which features modern architecture beside Italianate steeples, neo-gothic towers and the Art Nouveau designs of Glasgow's own Charles Rennie Mackintosh. Take the time to explore the Willow Tea Rooms and the Glasgow School of Art.



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Our accommodation tonight is at a centrally located hotel where we will meet for dinner with our fellow travellers and guides as we commence our discovery of Scotland.

### DAY 2: SATURDAY 13 MAY - OBAN

Depart Glasgow and travel overland to Oban, passing the beautiful famed shores of Loch Lomond, the largest inland stretch of water in Great Britain. Take in the views as we pass Ben Lomond, a munro, rising to 974 metres (3196 feet), before continuing through the mountains to Loch Awe. We will visit the Inveraray Castle and connect with Clan Campbell as we walk around the beautiful grounds and explore the castle. When we arrive in Oban, a lovely seaside village with cobbled streets and stone houses, we will board the Polar Pioneer.

### DAY 3: SUNDAY 14 MAY - GIGHA & ISLAY

The southernmost isle of the Inner Hebrides, Gigha is one of the smallest populated Islands in the Hebrides. Meaning Good or God Island, the highest mountain is Creag Breahn. Nestled in woodland and extensive gardens Achamore House was built in 1884 for Lt-Col William James Scarlett, the 3rd Lord Abinger. One of the warmest places in Scotland, the gardens of Achamore House was purchased by the people of Gigha in 2002. Operated as a trust they represent the plant collector's love and the garden designer's eye. The earliest documented record of distilling in Scotland occurred as long ago as 1494, in the tax records of the day, the Exchequer Rolls. The entry lists "Eight bolls of malt to Friar John Cor where with to make aqua vitae" (water of life). This afternoon, be part of history and share a dram of whisky, the water of life, ashore at one of Islay's historic distilleries: Lagavulin Distillery.

### DAY 4: MONDAY 15 MAY - STAFFA, IONA & TRESHNISH

Our visit to Staffa features the hexagonal basalt cliffs which culminate in Fingal's Cave- a spectacular natural feature named by the Celts as 'Uamh-Binh' or "the Cave of Melody". Abundant penguins, razorbills and guillemots use the island for breeding and accessing the surrounding rich marine environment. This afternoon we visit Iona. The centre of the Celtic world in 563 AD, the Irish missionary St. Columba went into exile and established a small monastic community there, its basic layout is known through the writings of Abbot Adomnan in the 600s. Driven out of Iona by Viking raids, most of the monastic community moved to Kells in Ireland around 800. In more peaceful times, around 1200, a Benedictine abbey and nunnery were established on the site. It is these buildings (heavily restored) that we see today

### DAY 5: TUESDAY 16 MAY - ISLE OF SKYE - LOCH SKAVAIG & LOCH COURISK ISLE OF RUM

From Bronze Age man, Iron Age people, Vikings and World Wars - time has left its mark on the Orkney Islands, the green isles. We will land in the seaside town of Stromness, a past safe haven for Vikings, whaling and fishing, and now a ferry gateway to Scotland. Highlights of visiting this Orkney Island will include visiting Kirkwall, formally known as the site of the ancient Norse town founded 1000 years ago. We will make our way to the historic village of Skara Brae. In the winter of 1850, a great storm battered Orkney, the grass was stripped from a large mound, then known as 'Skerrabra'. The outline of a number of stone buildings was revealed- something that intrigued the local laird, William Watt of Skaill, he embarked on an excavation of the site. Today, Skara Brae, as it has become known - survives as eight dwellings, linked together by a series of low, covered passages. We will also ensure we have time to visit the famous Ring of Brodgar Henge, a neolithic Orkney World Heritage Site.

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### DAY 6: WEDNESDAY 17 MAY - ST KILDA

Remote and battered by the Atlantic seas, St Kilda is a near mystical island with dual UNESCO World Heritage site status for its natural and cultural significance. St Kilda is deemed Europe's most important seabird colony – with abundant penguins, fulmars and the largest colony of gannets in Britain. Inhabited till 1930, the 19th century village layout still remains, allowing us to envisage life on this island where the bird life provided sustenance for the villagers. Enjoy the privilege to visit St Kilda and look out across to Village Bay.

### DAY 7: THURSDAY 18 MAY - STORNOWAY - ISLE OF LEWIS

Stornoway is the main town on the Isle of Lewis with just over 6,000 people, about a third of the island's total population – home to a mix of traditional industries like fishing, Harris Tweed and farming. Arriving at Stornoway, we land in this Gaelic heartland to explore the Stone Age 'Callanish', the primordial configuration of standing stones. Crossing the gentle troughs and rounded tops of the landscape we explore the cultural Ghearrannan Blackhouse Village and meet the people of this area. As we stroll the alleyways of Stornoway, check out the local tweed or wander the pathways of Lews Castle gardens we are sure to discover the secret of timelessness in the Hebrides

### DAY 8: FRIDAY 19 MAY - STROMNESS - ORKNEY ISLANDS

From Bronze Age man, Iron Age people, Vikings and World Wars – time has left its mark on the Orkney Islands, the green isles. We will land in the seaside town of Stromness, a past safe haven for Vikings, whaling and fishing, and now a ferry gateway to Scotland. Highlights of visiting Orkney Island include Kirkwall, formally known as the site of the ancient Norse town founded 1000 years ago. We will make our way to the historic village of Skara Brae. In the winter of 1850, a great storm battered

Orkney, the grass was stripped from a large mound, then known as 'Skerrabra'. The outline of a number of stone buildings was revealed – something that intrigued the local laird, William Watt of Skaill, he embarked on an excavation of the site. Today, Skara Brae, as it has become known – survives as eight dwellings, linked together by a series of low, covered passages. We will also ensure we have time to visit the famous Ring of Brodgar Henge, a neolithic Orkney World Heritage Site.

### DAY 9: SATURDAY 20 MAY - NORTH RONALDSAY / FAIR ISLE

North Ronaldsay is renowned for its beautiful coastal scenery, abundant birdlife and its famed sheep. After a short Zodiac ride ashore there will be the opportunity to meet with some of the 60 residents of the island to learn more about their unique lifestyle and especially the unique North Ronaldsay Sheep which have evolved over generations to the particular conditions of North Ronaldsay and which are farmed collectively. Others may choose to join our naturalists on a nature walk searching for some of the many bird species which are both resident and vagrant visitors. We will also enjoy time in the Fair Isle, famous for birds, knitwear and historic shipwrecks, Fair Isle is a tiny jewel of an island lying half-way between Orkney and Shetland. Owned by the National Trust for Scotland, it's one of Britain's most successful small communities, pioneering projects in wildlife tourism, wind power and sustainable management of the environment. The island is an internationally important seabird breeding site. From April to August the cliffs are busy with the sound (and smell!) of thousands of fulmars, kittiwakes, razorbills, guillemots, gannets, shags and penguins, while skuas and terns fiercely defend their nests on the moorland. The 70 or so islanders mostly live in traditional crofts on the more fertile and low-lying southern third of the island. The northern part is



largely rough grazing and rocky moorland, rising to the 217 metre Ward Hill.

#### DAY 10: SUNDAY 21 MAY - LERWICK

Lerwick is the Shetland Islands capital. Its cobblestone streets once filled with the rush created by fishing and ship building, today this port town charms as you wander the same streets of the town and waterfront. We spend the morning discovering Mousa Broch, standing 13 metres high, it is Scotland's most impressive and best surviving Iron Age tower or broch. Today we know brochs were built in Shetland around 400-200 BC, the quality of stone, the workmanship and overall size of Mousa are believed to contribute to why it has survived so well. Afterwards, we head to the south of Lerwick to Jarlshof where we delve into more than 4,000 years of human settlement in the same location. Neolithic people first settled this site in Shetland around 2700 BC, and it remained in use until the AD 1600s. Discoveries made here include oval-shaped Bronze Age houses, an Iron Age broch and wheelhouses, Norse longhouses, a medieval farmstead, and a laird's house dating back to the 1500s

#### DAY 11: MONDAY 22 MAY - LERWICK / FLY TO EDINBURGH

Today we fly to Scotland's medieval capital of Edinburgh with the local airline. Here, we enjoy a city tour where we explore the cobbled streets, hilltop castle, and many of the top attractions before heading to our hotel for your final night with the group.

#### DAY 12: TUESDAY 23 MAY - EDINBURGH

After breakfast and farewells, continue on with your travel arrangements, whether that is more time in Edinburgh, south to England, further afield or directly homeward bound. NOTE: Itinerary, landings and all other activities during the cruise

depend strongly on weather conditions and are subject to change at the discretion of the expedition leader or captain of the vessel.



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## YOUR SHIP:

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**YOUR SHIP:**

**VESSEL TYPE:**

**LENGTH:**

**PASSENGER CAPACITY:**

**BUILT/REFURBISHED:**



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## PRICING

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