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SCOTLAND & THE FAROES (SERENISSIMA)

This unique expedition cruise is one of our most popular and will appeal to those who prefer their islands deserted, but with abundant bird and wildlife. During this unique voyage, we will journey along rugged coastlines and visit once inhabited islands aboard the charming MS Serenissima, venturing far north to the Orkney and Shetland Islands, Faroe Islands and the Hebrides. We will witness vibrant colours and amazingly prolific birdlife, explore deserted villages and learn of the history and ancient culture of unique island life. Such a journey can of course only be undertaken by a special vessel with the self-sufficient qualities of the MS Serenissima and with our Zodiacs we will be able to land on remote beaches and cruise close to shorelines and cliffs crowded with birdlife. Enabling us to land in remote places, the Zodiacs make the otherwise inaccessible readily available. Although we will set sail with a schedule, this will not be set in stone as these are perfect waters for expedition cruising and our Captain and expedition team will keep a flexible approach allowing for the opportunity to fully experience the unexpected whether it be a sighting of dolphins, a whale or any unusual event.



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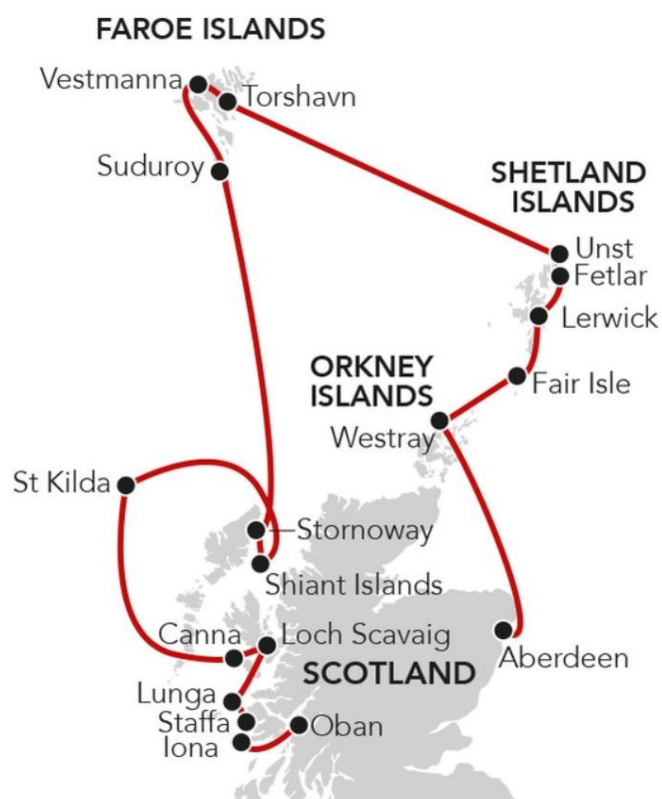
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After a morning at sea we spend the afternoon in the Orkney Islands as we explore the islands to the north of the mainland. On Westray we will visit Noup Head, an RSPB reserve on the sea cliffs and home to up to 100,000 nesting seabirds. We also see Notland Castle, an incomplete fortress built in the 16th century by Gilbert Balfour, Mary Queen of Scots' Sheriff of Orkney, whilst in the main village of Pierowall we find the Westray Heritage Centre housing Neolithic carvings.

Day 3 Fair Isle & Lerwick.

This morning we anchor off the remote island of Fair Isle. Located midway between the Shetland and Orkney islands, the tiny population of sixty or so islanders always extends us a warm welcome. Enjoy a walk across the island, perhaps visiting the RSPB site and searching out the puffin slopes, visit the community hall for a cup of tea or maybe purchase some of the famous knitwear. Sail over lunch for Lerwick where we arrive this evening and will be entertained by local musicians as we overnight in port.

Day 4 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 5000 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

ITINERARY

Day 1 Aberdeen, Scotland.

Embark the MS Serenissima this afternoon. Transfers will be provided from Aberdeen Airport and Railway Station at a fixed time. Sail this evening to the Orkney Islands.

Day 2 Westray, Orkney Islands.



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farmstead, and the 16th century laird's house. Return to the ship for lunch and enjoy a free afternoon to explore this historic port. Perhaps wander through its narrow stone lanes or maybe visit the excellent Shetland Museum, containing artefacts from shipwrecks and the whaling era.

[Day 5 Fetlar & Unst, Shetland Islands.](#)

We continue our exploration of the Shetlands with visits to the northern islands of Fetlar and Unst. Fetlar has been inhabited for over 5000 years and lays claim to being the first Norse landing site in the Shetlands. Known as the most fertile of the Shetland Islands, the wildflowers bring colour to the landscape whilst the birdlife on the island is prolific. Our expedition team will lead walks ashore including the Fetlar Interpretative Centre and Museum where we will learn about the wildlife and archaeological history of the island. Over lunch we sail to Unst, Britain's most northerly inhabited island and at the Heritage Centre we will learn about the islanders struggles over the centuries and the industries that have prospered whilst the Unst Boat Haven is dedicated to the history of the islands distinctive wooden boats which descend from Viking craft. We also visit Saxa Vord with views over Hermaness National Nature Reserve and Muckle Flugga stacks which is home to thousands of gannets and puffins as well as rare arctic-alpine plants.

[Day 6 Torshavn, Faroe Islands.](#)

After a morning at sea we make our first call in the Faroes at Torshavn. From our berth we will join a guided tour through Torshavn over the hills to Kirkjubour, the island's oldest cultural

centre, where we see the ruins of the 13th century St Magnus Cathedral and the 11th century church, still in use. We also visit the 900-year old "Roykstovan", the old bishopric, considered to be the oldest wooden house in Europe. For the more active we will arrange a hike in the hills surrounding the town to discover the local flora and fauna. We will moor overnight for anyone wishing to take an evening stroll in the town.

[Day 7 Vestmanna.](#)

Sail at dawn to Vestmanna, our base for today as we explore the northwest corner of Streymoy and the nearby cliffs. Here we will board local boats to explore these vertical cliffs that climb almost 1500 feet, sailing into grottos carved by the surf over the years and watching the thousands of seabirds including puffins, guillemots, fulmars and kittiwakes that nest here each summer. After lunch on board, we will drive to the village of Saksun, an isolated settlement situated beneath steep majestic mountains. We visit Duvugaroar, an old farmhouse which is now a museum as well as a traditional Faeroese wooden church in Kollafjord.

[Day 8 Suduroy.](#)

Suduroy, the southernmost island of the group is our base for the morning. From the port of Tvoroyri we have a choice of activities. Choose to join an island drive passing the beautiful scenery as we drive between the villages seeing the stunning geology, fjords, tunnels and architecture of the island and end at the southernmost point and the Akraberg lighthouse. In Porkeri we will take the ridge-top road which winds up the mountainside for wonderful views towards the steep cliffs on the



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west coast, the Beinisvoro promontory to the north and the luscious grass slopes to the east. To locals, this delivers the essence of the Faroe Islands with mountains and fjords, villages and valleys, birds, sheep and nature. Alternatively, those feeling active may wish to join a hike to Hvaanhagi, a beautiful, uninhabited place north of Tvøroyri on the east coast of Suduroy. The view is fantastic towards the three islands Litla Dimun, Stora Dimun and Skuvoy. There are sheep and birds, a valley with a lake and beautiful high mountains.

[Day 9 Stornoway & Shiant Islands, Outer Hebrides.](#)

Arrive today on the Isle of Lewis. On leaving the island capital of Stornoway, we will head across the island 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 final 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. This afternoon we will board the Zodiacs for a cruise around the spectacular basalt cliffs of the Shiant Islands, a group of little islands located a few miles off the shores of

Lewis. This is an excellent place to spot puffins, razorbills, guillemots, seals and hopefully white-tailed eagles.

[Day 10 St Kilda, Outer Hebrides.](#)

Cruise past two of the largest gannetries in the world at Stac Lee and Berneray. These impressive stacs rise 170 metres from the sea and are home to up to 60,000 breeding pairs of northern gannet. Later, this morning we continue onto 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 the 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.

[Day 11 Canna & Loch Scavaig, Inner Hebrides.](#)

Arrive this morning on Canna. Strategically placed between the mountains of Rum and the Outer Hebrides, the island of Canna and its adjoining neighbour Sanday are bound together like some rare text that reveals over 60 million years of Hebridean geology and history. They have an amazingly rich archaeological landscape with remains dating to all periods of settled



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occupation in Scotland. Canna is run as a single farm and bird sanctuary by the National Trust for Scotland and enjoys the best harbour in the Small Isles, a horn shaped haven. The fertile soil and its diversity of habitats mean that the island has an incredibly rich plant life with 248 native flowering plants recorded. We will see Canna House, and wander across grassy basalt plateaus to the 600-foot cliffs on the north shore. Over lunch we sail to lovely Loch Scavaig on the island of Skye. 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 12 Staffa, Iona & Lunga.](#)

Awake this morning at our anchorage off Staffa, the south side where the perpendicular rock face features an imposing series of black basalt columns, known as the Colonnade, which have been cut by the sea into cathedralesque caverns, most notably Fingal's Cave. Weather permitting, we will use our Zodiacs to explore closer. Later sail to nearby 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. Visit the Abbey or perhaps walk along the white sandy beaches or go in search of the corncrake amongst the irises. End the day at the Treshnish Isles, an archipelago of uninhabited volcanic islets. The island of Lunga is the largest of the Treshnish Isles in Argyll and Bute. Of volcanic origin, Lunga

has been described as 'a green jewel in a peacock sea' and is a summer nesting-place for hundreds of sea birds.

[Day 13 Oban.](#)

Disembark this morning after breakfast. Transfers will be provided to Glasgow International Airport and Central Station at a fixed time.

[Please Note:](#)

Itineraries are subject to change.



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PASSENGER CAPACITY:

BUILT/REFURBISHED:



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