

ST KILDA AND THE SHIANTS - BRITISH ISLES CRUISE

This Outer Hebridean (10 night) cruise will, if the weather is kind, give us time to explore fabulous St Kilda; the Shiant Isles; and many dramatic islands of the Outer Hebrides. Our starting point is Oban, the gateway to the western Scottish Islands. Our small ships will anchor in scenic, lonely islands, in tranquil bays and, throughout the trip, we see incredible wildlife - soaring sea and golden eagles, many species of sea birds, basking sharks, orca and minke whales, porpoises, dolphins and seals. Aboard our small ships you can do as little or as much as you want. Sit back and enjoy the trip as you travel through the Sounds; pass the islands and sea lochs; view the spectacular mountains and fast running tides that make extraordinary spiral patterns and glassy runs in the sea; marvel at the lofty headland lighthouses and castles; and, if you want, become involved in working the wee ships. Our ultimate destination is Village Bay, Hirta, on the archipelago of St Kilda - a UNESCO world heritage site. Hirta is the largest of the four islands in the St Kilda group and was inhabited for some 2000 years before the villagers were evacuated in 1930, never to return. The sea cliffs (the highest in the UK) of the St Kilda islands rise dramatically out of the Atlantic and are the protected breeding grounds of many different sea bird species (gannets, fulmars, Leach's petrel, which are hunted at night by giant skuas, and puffins). These thousands of seabirds were once an important source of food for the islanders. The breathtaking islands of Soay and Boreay have rare, ancient species of feral sheep and the St Kildan wren and field mouse are both unique sub species.



ITINERARY

Days 1 - 11 Cruising St Kilda and the Shiants

Some of the places we may visit are: Oban: Your departure point will be Oban (Dunstaffnage Marina), the gateway to the Hebridean isles. After a short introduction to life on board our small ship we will set sail to our first destination. Afternoon tea (clotted cream and scones) will be served en-route. Tobermory: One of the most picturesque towns in the Western Isles. If you wish, we can make time to visit the local distillery or visit eagles (Mull is the best place in the UK to see sea eagles). Canna, the Small Isles: We can set sail for the scenic anchorage at Canna and its neighbouring Sanday. There are seabirds galore on the island's high sea cliffs - puffins, shags, razorbills, black guillemots, Manx shearwaters - and breeding there, in the high crags, are sea eagles. There are two lovely beaches, three churches, a tiny ruined castle and a population of less than 20!



A short climb up Compass Hill gives wonderful views of Skye and our destination, the islands of the Outer Hebrides. Rum, the Small Isles: We will pass close to the Small Isles of Muck and Eigg to arrive at Rum the largest of the Small Isles, with an ancient volcano, where we can spend a night at Loch Scresort. Rum Island is a National Nature Reserve and famous for its herds of red deer and sheer sea cliffs which are home to nesting sea eagles. A visit to the Kinloch castle near the anchorage is definitely worthwhile. Castlebay, Barra: We can anchor at the village of Castlebay on the island of Barra of the Outer Hebrides. Castlebay was where much of the film Whisky Galore was made about the WW II stranding of the S.S. Politician in Eriskay Sound with her cargo of 260,00 whisky bottles! Castlebay was once an important herring curing station and near our anchorage, surrounded by water, is Kisimul Castle, the ancient seat of the MacNeils of Barra. Hirta, St Kilda: If the weather is kindly we up-anchor early and head out through the Sound of Pabbay for Hirta, St Kilda. Two nights at anchor on Hirta and a day ashore. Lochboisdale, South Uist: If the Atlantic is being too unfriendly for St Kilda, from Barra we will head north, up the island chain, pass the Sound of Barra and the islands of Hellisay and Gighay, to our next quiet anchorage in Lochboisdale on South Uist. We can explore the incredible endless beaches and flower-rich Machair of the islands of South Uist, Benbecula and North Uist. Lochmaddy: Situated on North Uist, Lochmaddy is the island's main village. The village was probably settled by the Norse and at one time was a base for seventeenth century pirates! Shiant Isles: The so called 'enchanted' or 'holy isles' in Gaelic, they live up to their name. Situated between Lewis and Harris and northern Skye they are a haven for birdlife. They were once owned by Compton Mackenzie who wrote the famous novel Whisky Galore. Loch Dunvegan: With famous Dunvegan Castle built on a high rock overlooking the Loch which was the site of an old Norse fort. The castle has been home to the chief of the Clan MacLeod for hundreds of years. Loch Spelve: A narrow entrance leads us in to the tranquil waters of Loch Spelve with its surrounding ancient oak forest. The anchorage gives us a different perspective than our previous views of the wonderful mountains of Mull. There are resident otters along the loch's shoreline.

Please Note:

Please note that your voyage is weather dependent. Weather doesn't just mean good or bad weather. There are many considerations such as tidal gates, wind direction and strength, the strength and direction of currents, overfalls, and fetch. Depending upon the weather and nature's conditions, wildlife viewing varies. If you wish to visit a specific place or have a specific experience, such as sea eagle tours or whisky tasting, then please do let your skipper know and he will endeavour to meet your request.



YOUR SHIP: GEMINI EXPLORER

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VESSEL TYPE:

LENGTH:

PASSENGER CAPACITY:

BUILT/REFURBISHED:

Gemini Explorer, a mini cruise ship, is a historic, converted cruising lifeboat that once roamed the Western Approaches and was involved in the storm of the ill-fated 1979 Fastnet Race. Gemini Explorer was built in 1974 in Bideford Shipyard as the City of Bristol (70-003), one of three, Clyde class, cruising lifeboats (see Wikipedia) with an extended offshore range of 1700 miles. She is powered by two powerful Gardner diesel engines and she will achieve speeds of up to twelve knots. The Gemini Explorer entered service at the Clovelly Lifeboat Station on the North Devonshire coast and, after saving 44 lives, was finally retired in 1989. Since then, after extensive re-fits and modifications (including a new galley, high bulwarks, viewing top deck, en-suite accommodation and a well lit saloon), she has been converted to a mini cruise ship and today sails as the Gemini Explorer. However, there are parts of the insides of the vessel that have been kept in their original state to give an exciting insight in to role she once played as a cruising lifeboat. As a mini cruise ship she has voyaged as far away as Greenland and, for the last 10 years, sailed as a charter vessel on the east coast of Scotland. In 2020 after a further refit and upgrade she will be sailing the beautiful islands and sea lochs of Scotland's west coast as part of St Hilda Sea Adventures little fleet. Accommodation The deck saloon is where everyone dines and socialises and where everyone enjoys a convivial atmosphere that is encouraged by shipboard life aboard this ex-cruising lifeboat. Cabins are warm and comfortable with eight berths for our guests. In the forward part of the vessel there is a double en-suite, a twin en-suite and single en-suite. In the aft part of the vessel there is a cabin which can sleep up to three guests (choice of one double bed and two single berths). This aft cabin shares the bathroom with the two crew. All en-suites and the bathroom have a washbasin, toilet and shower. All cabin linen and towels are supplied. There is an upper viewing deck complete with teak benches and perfect for spotting wildlife and relaxing. You also have some deck space to embark your own equipment such as kayaks and paddleboards. You will also be able to use the onboard two person





sea kayak.

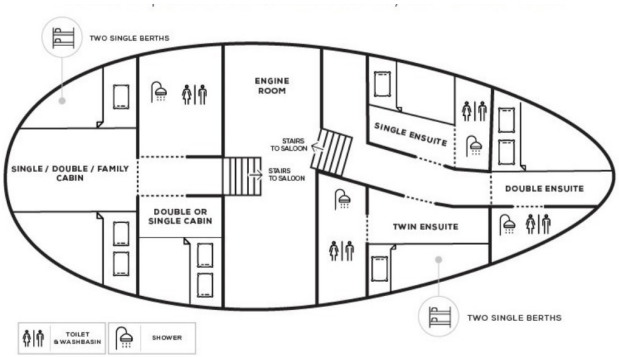
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INSIDE YOUR SHIP



Double / Twin Cabin En-suite



Single Cabin



Single Cabin En-suite



Twin / Double Cabin En-suite



Twin Cabin



Twin Cabin Semi En-suite





PRICING

23-Jun-2027 to 03-Jul-2027

Single Cabin	£2600 GBP pp
Twin Cabin	£2850 GBP pp
Twin / Double Cabin En-suite	£3950 GBP pp
Single Cabin En-suite	£3950 GBP pp

26-Jun-2027 to 06-Jul-2027

Twin Cabin En-suite	£3700 GBP pp
Double Cabin adjacent En-suite	£3700 GBP pp
Double Cabin En-suite	£3950 GBP pp

12-Jul-2027 to 22-Jul-2027

Twin Cabin Semi En-suite	£3650 GBP pp
Single Cabin	£3400 GBP pp
Double / Twin Cabin En-suite	£3950 GBP pp

25-Jul-2027 to 04-Aug-2027

Single Cabin En-suite	£3950 GBP pp
Twin / Double Cabin En-suite	£3950 GBP pp
Twin Cabin	£2850 GBP pp
Single Cabin	£2600 GBP pp

28-Jul-2027 to 07-Aug-2027

Twin Cabin En-suite	£3700 GBP pp
Double Cabin adjacent En-suite	£3700 GBP pp
Double Cabin En-suite	£3950 GBP pp