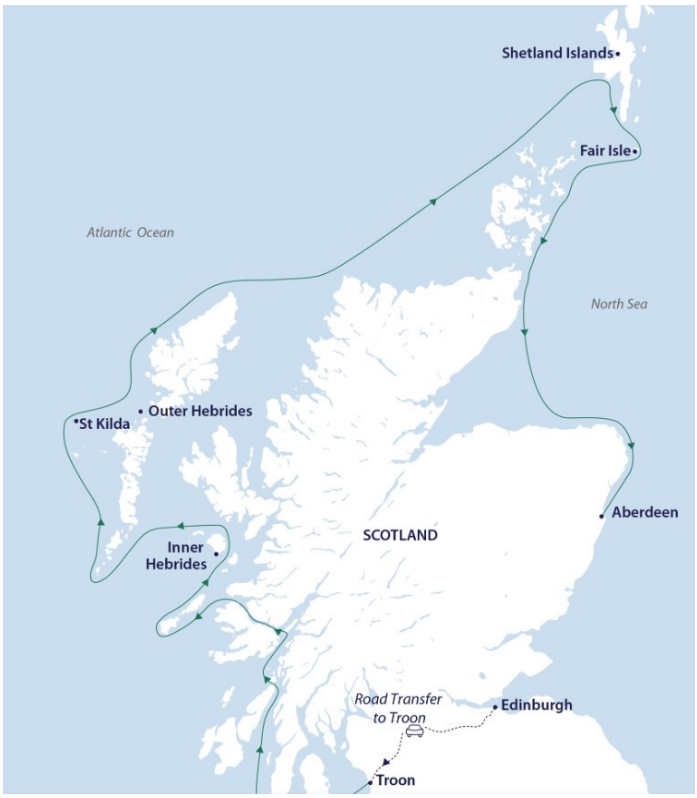


WILD SCOTLAND CRUISE - HEBRIDES, SHETLAND & ORKNEY ISLANDS EXPEDITION CRUISE

Discover the wild isles of Scotland, from the windswept Hebrides, inhabited for over 8,000 years, to the verdant Orkney Islands, where ancient Neolithic and Viking sites conjure images of civilisations long gone. Zodiac-cruise past sea-sculpted coastlines watching for dolphins, seals, and photograph seabirds in one of Europe's largest seabird colonies. Visit charming villages, meet the friendly locals and maybe even sample a wee dram of Scotland's finest.



ITINERARY

Day 1 Edinburgh

Having made your way to Edinburgh, you will be met by a representative of Aurora Expeditions and transferred to our group hotel. Upon arrival at your included hotel, please visit the Aurora Expeditions hospitality desk to collect your luggage cabin tags and to speak with our ground operations team, who may have information to share with you about pre-embarkation or to provide you with information about where to dine, withdraw cash



or purchase last minute items from a local pharmacy or supermarket. The remainder of your time is at leisure. All meals today are at your own expense. Accommodation: Courtyard Edinburgh Hotel (or similar)

Day 2 Troon, West Scotland

After breakfast, check-out and bring your luggage to the foyer. Please place any items required today in your hand luggage as your main bag will be transferred to the ship. Edinburgh awaits us this morning as our local guide welcomes us with stories of Scotland's capital city. Stretching just over one mile, five cobblestoned streets make up the walking precinct of the Royal Mile. Starting at The Palace of Holyroodhouse, the official residence of the British monarch in Scotland, we'll step back in time to hear tales of princes, poets, and politicians as we stroll past some of Edinburgh's most iconic buildings including the Church of Canongate and Scotland's own parliament house. Perched atop an extinct volcano, Edinburgh Castle dominates the capital city's skyline just as it has dominated Scotland's long and colourful history. This instantly recognisable fortress is a powerful national symbol, and part of Edinburgh's World Heritage Site. Your audio tour brings the castles inhabitants alive as you discover highlights such as the Royal Palace, the Crown Jewels, Mons Meg and the Scottish National War Memorial. You'll have time to explore the castle precinct and Royal Mile which are scattered with friendly pubs and charismatic restaurants (lunch own expense). Our two-hour transfer takes us to the west coast port of Troon where our expedition team will welcome you aboard the Greg Mortimer in the late afternoon. Once onboard, settle into your cabin before our important briefings. We will set sail along Scotland's northwest coast in the evening and meet your expedition team and crew at Captain's Welcome Dinner.

Days 3-4 Inner Hebrides

From golden beaches to jagged peaks, bleak moors and heather clad hills; from abandoned settlements to picturesque villages, our days in the Hebrides archipelago will be packed with variety. We may explore remote lochs beneath some of Britain's most untamed mountains and wander between unusual rock formations. We may watch for whales, dolphins, otters, seals, and the increasingly rare basking sharks. Possibly we will land at an island reserve that is home to red deer and white-tailed sea eagles. Kayakers will be introduced to their craft and will be briefed for their adventures, before picking up paddles to circumnavigate tiny islets or glide into narrow waterways that intertwine the islands. Hikers may opt for panoramic views from summits and ridges. Early the next morning we will aim for the tiny island of Iona. Barely 5 kilometres (3 miles long), Iona is renowned as the birthplace of Christianity in Britain. It is also a burial ground of early Scottish Kings. The Irish monk, St Columba and twelve disciples, landed here and founded a monastery in 563 CE. From this base, St Columba set about converting Scotland and much of Northern England to Christianity. On Staffa, we hope to have the chance to explore Fingals Cave, where the melodious sound of waves crashing against towering basalt pillars inspired Mendelssohnns Hebridean Overture. We may enter the cave in Zodiacs, or clamber ashore to walk into the mouth of the cave. On shore we will also find Puffins in abundance. The rugged Isle of Skye, named after the Norse word for 'cloud', is a hikers' paradise. It is a centre of Gaelic culture and some islanders still speak the language. The wildlife, history, geology and beautiful scenery make it one of our favourite islands to explore. We hope to make the following landings: The Cuillin Hills have earned a reputation as Britain's most untamed and challenging



mountains. The rocky jagged Black Cuillins attract rock climbers. The smoother conical granite peaks of the Red Cuillins are crowned with heather. We may land at Loch Scavaig in the heart of the Cuillins and take a short hike, perhaps to Loch Coruisk, for spectacular views and get a glimpse of the range's grandeur. Keener hikers may be able to venture further afield, weather permitting. Meanwhile kayakers may paddle around Loch Scavaig, into Loch Coruisk. They may explore the island of Soay and an abandoned shark fishing station - all against the backdrop of classic views of the Cuillins. To the south of the Cuillin hills we may visit Rubha' an Dunain, a small uninhabited peninsula on the southwest corner of Skye commanding an impressive view of the sea routes nearby. As a result of its strategic position we can see archaeological remains--from a Neolithic chambered cairn, to a Viking canal and more recent black houses. Depending on weather conditions, we may choose to visit the small island of Canna in search of the rare basking sharks, common seals and bird cliffs.

Days 5-7 Outer Hebrides

From the Inner Hebrides we make our way to the Outer Hebrides - also known as the Western Isles - that stretch for 209 kilometres (128 miles) and look out on their western side to the Atlantic Ocean. Our first stop is at the Isle of Lewis, the largest and northern-most island in the Outer Hebrides. We plan to make a stop at Callanais, where archaeology buffs will be keen to see the fascinating group of Standing Stones, dating from around 3,000 BCE. Nearby we may visit Bostadh House, a remarkable reconstruction of an Iron Age dwelling tucked away just above a beautiful white beach. Weather permitting we plan to land at the isolated archipelago (and World Heritage site) of St Kilda, where derelict crofts bear testament to the fortitude of islanders who once tended the unique Soay sheep and harvested seabirds for food--and to pay their rent in the form of wool, meat and feathers. The isles hold Europe's most important seabird colony and is home to Britain's highest sea stacks (rock columns). Island hopping northeast, we aim to visit tiny specks of land that bear the brunt of violent Atlantic storms and rarely see visitors. Home to breeding seals and some of Europe's largest seabird colonies, Sula Sgeir, North Rona and Flannan boast spectacular cliffs, fantastic rock stacks, hidden beaches and luxuriant heaths where sheep once grazed.

Days 8-9 Shetland Islands

Britain's most northerly islands lie almost 160 kilometres (99 miles) north of the Scottish mainland, at a similar latitude to the southern tip of Greenland, or Bergen in Norway. Kept relatively warm by the Gulf Stream, Shetland's 100 islands experience almost 24 hours of daylight in summer. They abound with nature reserves and archaeological sites and offer a taste of traditional island life. We plan to explore some of the following sites: The island of Foula is the most remote inhabited island in the UK. Its small community of about 30 residents welcome us to their island to enjoy the magnificent scenery, large seabird colonies, beautiful wildflowers and remarkable community life. Papa Stour offers some of the best sea caves in Britain where we may explore with Zodiacs and kayaks. Jarlshof is one of Shetland's best preserved and most complex archaeological sites. It was exposed by storms in the late 19th century. The Old House of Sumburgh, built here in the 17th century, was named 'Jarlshof' by Sir Walter Scott in his novel 'The Pirate'. The record of human occupation dates from around 3,200 BCE. Jarlshof's main Bronze Age site is the house of a bronzesmith working around 800 BC. Clay moulds into which molten bronze was poured

revealed that he was casting axe heads and short swords. It seems that Shetland suited early Norse settlers, for they quickly settled here and left their mark on Shetland's history for ages to come. Mousa Broch, on the small uninhabited island of Mousa, is the best preserved of Scotland's 570 brochs (fortified Iron Age towers). Storm petrels nest among its stones, which can be seen when visiting the broch at night. In daylight, a large colony of common and grey seals basks on its shores and you may spot otter (Dratsi, in Shetland dialect). Hermaness National Nature Reserve, is close to Britain's most northerly point. The reserve is a place of bird cries and sea smells, of myth and mist. The cliffs rise 170 metres (558 feet) above the Atlantic. During summer they are alive with the cacophony, and raw guano smell of over 100,000 breeding seabirds: kittiwakes, shags, snipe, dunlin, golden plover and Arctic skua, making this one of Europe's most diverse colonies. The grasslands, moors and cliff tops are a tapestry of colourful wildflowers - gentians, heather, orchids and thrift are a few of the species here. A rocky islet, Muckle Flugga is Britain's most northerly point and only 274 kilometres (170 miles) from Norway. A lighthouse was established here in 1854, to protect navy ships during the Crimean War. With its mile-long seabird cliffs, the Island of Noss is a National Nature Reserve. In breeding season, the sound of around 150,000 birds and chicks fills the air. Millions of years of wind and ice have honeycombed thousands of nesting ledges in sandstone cliffs almost 200-metres (656-feet) high. Resident seals and visiting otters feed in dense kelp around the shores.

Days 10-11 Orkney Islands

Midway between Orkney and Shetland, Fair Isle houses a major European ornithological research station, and is also famous for knitwear and historic shipwrecks. About five kilometres by three kilometres / three miles by two miles in area, it is surrounded by impressive cliffs. The 70 or so islanders mainly live in traditional crofts on the more fertile low-lying southern part of the island. A bird watchers' paradise, Fair Isle lies on the intersection of major flight-paths from Scandinavia, Iceland and Faroe. In summer, the cliffs teem with breeding fulmars, kittiwakes, guillemots, gannets, shags and puffins. The Isle is an excellent place to view seabirds, especially puffins at close range. Fair Isle also has over 250 species of flowering plants, including wetland flowers, rare orchids, alpine species and common wildflowers. We'll be welcomed by the hospitable villagers and may take a hike or visit the museum. Grey and common seals inhabit these waters around Fair Isle, while sharp eyes may spot harbour porpoises, white-beaked dolphins, Atlantic white-sided dolphins, killer whales (orcas) and minke whales. Orkney's archipelago of 70 windswept islands, 10 kilometres / 6 miles north of the Scottish mainland, a rich tapestry of archaeology, history and wildlife awaits. We follow the passage of time--from 5,000-year-old World Heritage Neolithic sites, past relics from Vikings and reminders of World War II occupation--to present day crofting communities. Imposing sea cliffs teem with seabirds and cliff top paths beckon the keen hikers among us. Our kayakers use paddle-power to explore sections of Orkney's fascinating coastline. At the Knap of Howar on Papa Westray lies the earliest known house in Northern Europe, occupied by Neolithic farmers over 5,000 years ago. At the east end of Scapa Flow remnants from World War II include an Italian Chapel, created by Italian prisoners of war made out of two Nissen huts, and the Churchill Barriers, constructed on the orders of Winston Churchill to keep out U-Boats. Discover the rich history in Kirkwall, capital of the Orkney Islands. Initial impressions are misleading, as the harbour area looks modern, but the narrow winding streets and



lanes of the old town, which have remained relatively unchanged over the centuries are appealing. Explore magnificent St Magnus Cathedral built from red and white sandstone and considered the finest medieval building in the north of Scotland before popping across the road to Tankerness House and Gardens, a restored 16th century former manse, now housing the Orkney Museum featuring archaeological artefacts from Neolithic times to the Vikings. The exhibition is a great way to whet your appetite for the archaeological gems you will find on the mainland including the unique and well-preserved 5,000-year-old semi-subterranean village of Skara Brae. Everything west of Kirkwall is known as West Mainland, an area of rich farmland, rolling hills and moorland, with dramatic cliffs along the Atlantic coastline. Some of the main archaeological attractions we may see include the standing Stones of Stenness, the Ring of Brodgar, and the chambered tombs of Maes Howes that to this day still have unresolved mysteries. One of the mainland's main attractions is Skara Brae, the best-preserved Stone-Age village in northern Europe, located in the spectacular white sands of the Bay of Skaill. Revealed in 1850 after a storm below away the dunes, the site dates from approximately 5,000 years ago and was occupied for about 600 years, showing a unique picture of the lifestyle of the original inhabitants.

Day 12 Aberdeen

On arrival in Aberdeen, disembark in the early morning and bid a fond farewell to fellow travellers before a transfer to the airport to continue your journey. Note: At the conclusion of the voyage, we recommend booking flights departing after 12.00 pm on the day of disembarkation in case there are delays.

Please Note:

In true expedition style we encourage exploration and adventure, offering flexibility in challenging environments in a way that puts you among the action to see and do as much as possible. This itinerary is only a guide and subject to change due to ice and weather conditions.



YOUR SHIP: DOUGLAS MAWSON

YOUR SHIP: **Douglas Mawson**

VESSEL TYPE:

LENGTH:

PASSENGER CAPACITY:

BUILT/REFURBISHED:

Douglas Mawson was launched in 2025. Named after the legendary Australian geologist and explorer, this new small ship embodies Mawson's pioneering spirit and is designed for global discovery. Featuring the revolutionary Ulstein X-BOW® and purpose-built with enhanced sustainability features, it takes a maximum 154 adventurers to the world's wildest places in smooth, quiet comfort. It boasts our most extensive range of cabins yet, including a range of single cabins. The Douglas Mawson features a host of amenities to help you connect with like-minded travellers and elevate your time onboard this floating base camp for adventure. After a long day of exploring, head to the back deck to swim in the heated outdoor swimming pool, find a sun bed to read on, or soak in one of two Jacuzzis. Work up a sweat in the gym before unwinding in the sauna, resolve to learn something new in the Citizen Science Centre, then enjoy a delicious meal with new and old friends in one of two restaurants. Or, with multiple observation areas throughout the ship, simply relax in comfort while you keep watch for wildlife or incredible landscapes unfold before you. While enjoying the luxurious amenities onboard, you can rest assured that the aim is to get you off the ship to explore the natural environment as much as possible to enjoy some unique activities remains unchanged. Newest Ulstein X-BOW ® The Douglas Mawson features the newest streamlined Ulstein X-BOW®, designed for global discovery. The revolutionary design cuts through the swell, offering unrivalled stability on ocean crossings and helping to reduce fuel consumption. It's just one of the many sustainability features that helps make travel more responsible. Heated Pool, Jacuzzis & Sauna In between landings, enjoy access to the onboard gym or unwind in the sauna. Or head to the back deck to swim in the heated outdoor pool, enjoy a drink at the pool bar, or soak in one of two Jacuzzis, watching the world go by. Leading Technology The Douglas Mawson is at the cutting edge of nautical technology, fitted with industry-leading technology including world-class return-to-port equipment. The ship also features a medical clinic designed for use in remote areas. Built for Adventure The Douglas Mawson features Zodiac access points and an activities platform, making boarding the Zodiacs as quick, efficient and safe as possible, minimising wait times and getting you closer to the action for longer. In our mudroom you will have access to lockers to store gear & boots and rapid drying areas for clothing. More Cabin Choices The Douglas Mawson features 11 different types of cabins, including a range of spacious single berth cabins - all adorned with elegant Nordic interior design features. Multiple Observation Areas As you explore the ship you will find indoor lounge areas with floor-to ceiling windows, and multiple open decks with expansive 270-360 degree views. The Glass Atrium Lounge inside the bow is a fantastic place to sit and watch for wildlife - with a drink in hand. There is no shortage of



spaces to take in the majesty of the incredible world outside! Lecture Theatre On all expeditions you will meet naturalists and local specialists, who offer presentations on their area of expertise to enhance your appreciation of the destination you are exploring. Join the team in the lecture theatre for presentations covering a broad range of topics to suit every interest, from history and culture to biology and climate change. Regardless of the topic, they all have one thing in common: they all aim to engage, educate, entertain and turn you into an ambassador for the planet. Citizen Science Center & Lounge Learn more about the world and the unique destinations Aurora visits by visiting the onboard naturalist and Expedition Team in the world-class Citizen Science Center. You will be rewarded for your thirst for knowledge with one of the best views on the ship. Library With floor-to-ceiling windows, the library is a peaceful sanctuary where you can find non-fiction books to read up on the day's destinations, use a public laptop to organise your photos or play board games with newfound friends. Choose from our range of informative non-fiction titles, wildlife guidebooks, travel journals, novels and a selection of children's books and board games. Wildlife guides, books and binoculars can also be found on the observation lounge on Deck 7. Mudroom No need to take your wet expedition gear back to your cabin to dry. Keep your cabin warm and cosy by leaving your outer jackets and pants in the mudroom. The mudroom is your launchpad for all shore excursions and activities. Here, you will have access to a locker when you can hang your gear up to dry, and store your boots between excursions. Swimming Pool & Jacuzzis There are two Jacuzzis on the top outside deck which offer amazing views of the world outside, a heated outdoor pool surrounded by sun beds you can relax on after a long day of exploring, and a pool bar. Gym & Sauna During your voyage, enjoy complimentary access to the gym or visit our sauna, which we highly recommend after the Polar Plunge! Restaurants One of the most important parts of any expedition is the food! Whatever adventures the day holds, you will be fuelled-up with hearty meals and delicious morning/afternoon teas cooked by our onboard chefs. Meals are a great time to soak up the expedition camaraderie in our open seating dining area. Share stories with your fellow travellers and ask our expedition team questions that may have come up during the day. Tea, coffee and snacks are available 24 hours a day, and our chefs offer different menu options and courses for each meal. Enjoy the range of house wine, beers and soft drinks included with dinner after a long day in the wild. We also invite you to join your captain and expedition team for informal Captain's Farewell drinks, with complimentary beverages and cocktail appetisers, followed by a 3 course meal. Bars & Lounges Communal meeting areas have always played a major role in fostering the warm camaraderie on board our ships. They are the heart of the expedition, where people meet to share tales from the day, swap photos, keep an eye out for wildlife and watch the sun go down. The bars and lounges on board are refined yet inviting places to gather, with floor-to-ceiling windows offering stunning views, and of course friendly bartenders to shoot the





breeze with.

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