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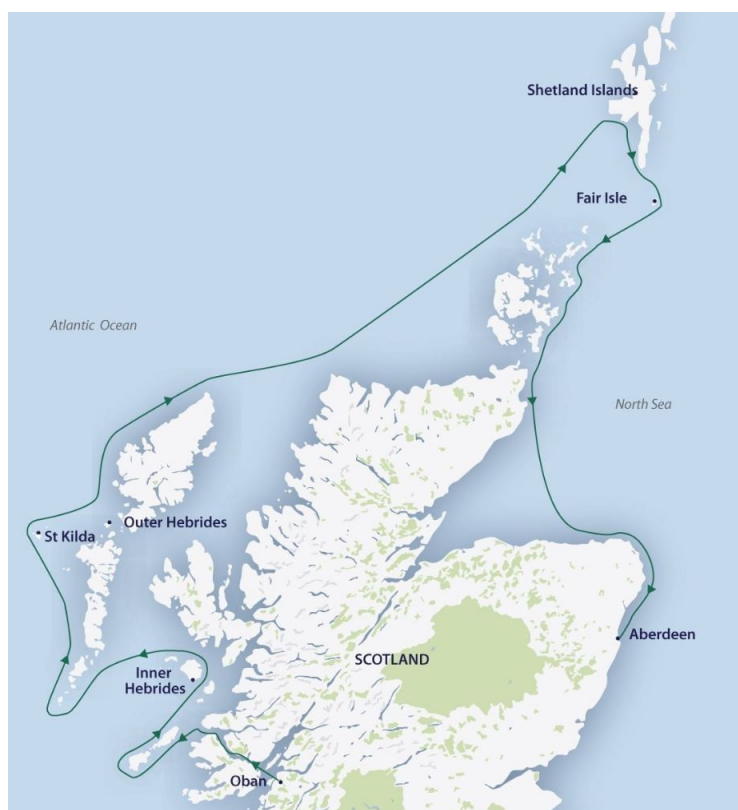


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WILD SCOTLAND ABOARD GREG MORTIMER

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

Arrive in Edinburgh and transfer to our group hotel. Upon check-in at Courtyard Edinburgh hotel, reception staff will provide you with Aurora Expeditions cabin tags. Please fill out the luggage tags clearly, showing your name and cabin number to allow us to deliver your luggage to your cabin. At tonight's voyage briefing, enjoy a welcome drink and meet fellow



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expeditioners. Accommodation: Courtyard Edinburgh (or similar)

Day 2 Troon, West Scotland

After check-out, discover Edinburgh on a sightseeing tour before transferring to Troon, where our expedition team will welcome you aboard the Greg Mortimer at approximately 4.00 pm. You'll have time to 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 AD. 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 Mendelssohn's 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 Dùnain, 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 km /

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128 mi 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 BC. 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 km / 99 mi 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 BC. 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 m / 558 ft 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 km / 170 mi 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



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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 m / 656 ft 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 km / 6 mi 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 Skail. 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

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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 do not recommend booking flights departing prior to 12.00 pm on the day of disembarkation in case there are delays.

Please Note:

In the spirit of expedition travel, we encourage exploration and adventure offering flexibility in challenging environments. This itinerary is only a guide and is subject to change due to weather, sea and other conditions beyond our control.



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YOUR SHIP: GREG MORTIMER

YOUR SHIP:

Greg Mortimer

VESSEL TYPE:

LENGTH:

PASSENGER CAPACITY:

BUILT/REFURBISHED:

Capable of negotiating the strongest winds and waves, the Greg Mortimer is built to world-class polar standards - designed in close consultation with our expedition specialists, taking advantage of our more than 25 years of experience. The Greg Mortimer redefines expedition cruising for the future, with just 132 passengers on board in the polar regions. Not only is the ship bigger to contend with adverse weather conditions, its added creature comforts make for a more enjoyable journey out on the open ocean. The Greg Mortimer remains true to our ethos and focus on multiple landings, flexible itineraries and family atmosphere - just with an improved home base! As a modern and custom-designed ship, the Greg Mortimer is at the cutting edge of nautical technology. Robust, powerful and built with our guests in mind, this ship marks a significant investment in our fleet's capabilities. From the European Arctic to the depths of Antarctica, and other far-flung destinations in-between, the Greg Mortimer will make your journey a breeze! Greg Mortimer X-BOWX-BOW™ Our expeditions face some of the worst Mother Nature can throw at us. However, this won't be problem on the Greg Mortimer with the introduction of the patented X-BOW™, created by Norwegian ship designer ULSTEIN. As one of the

leaders in marine engineering, ULSTEIN's X-BOW™ is an inverted bow concept that's been built on over 100 vessels in the shipping industry. Excitingly, we are the first expedition cruise operator to utilise this technology for the challenging open ocean waves! Hydraulic viewing platforms Although there is no doubt that you'll love the aesthetics of the Greg Mortimer, we are all here to admire the spectacular landscape and spot the elusive wildlife in their natural habitat. To ensure you get the best views possible, the new ship features unique viewing platforms, custom-built for the Greg Mortimer. Accessed from Deck 5, the two platforms fold out hydraulically for unobstructed views of passing marine life and seabirds - make sure your camera is locked and loaded! Zodiac launching platform Zodiacs are a vital part of getting up close and personal on your adventure - sneaking into areas that the Greg Mortimer can't reach. On this new ship, there are specially designed launching platforms that enables us to load Zodiacs easily and quickly, allowing you to spend more time exploring on the two to three daily landings. There are 15 Zodiacs that are boarded from either side of Deck 3 (sea level), perfect for when there is a group of fluffy cute penguin chicks that we need a photo of! Activity Platform Regardless of your destination, we offer a number of additional activities to allow you to see more of the environment. From kayaking and diving to climbing and ski touring, it's these optional activities that often leave the biggest impression on your trip as a whole. Onboard the Greg Mortimer, there is a spacious prep and loading platform for these activities and more - designed in consultation with our expert activity guides. Environmentally friendly Climate change and carbon



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emissions continue to be major issues that everyone needs to be aware of and actively managing. This includes reduced emissions into the air and sea, lower energy consumption, high fuel efficiency, reduced light pollution for minimal wildlife disruption and lower on-board plastic use. It's vital to also mention the state-of-the-art virtual anchoring technology of the X-BOW™, which means the ship can float anchorless while launching Zodiacs, kayaks etc, without disturbing delicate sea floor areas. Safety features This starts with the return-to-port equipment - not compulsory on a ship of this size - which duplicates the propulsion system. This enables the ship to maintain operating systems and comfort in the event of engine failure. Furthermore, the Greg Mortimer is Polar Code 6 compliant, holds BV class and is fully compliant with the latest SOLAS requirements. It's also built with a Rolls Royce stabiliser system. If there's an incident or accident during your adventure, the ship has an on-board, fully-stocked medical centre - where our trained medical team can provide necessary treatment in a timely fashion. Safety continues to be an issue that our team takes very serious and the Greg Mortimer allows us to create an environment where you can concentrate on the brilliant landscape and wildlife, without worrying about your wellbeing. Ship Life Greg Mortimer is designed to serve your every need. It's your bedroom, bathroom, lounge, dining room and even your observatory. Make yourself at home, the Greg Mortimer is yours to enjoy! Observation Points Let's face it - you don't want windowless rooms when travelling around some of the most beautiful locations around the world. This is why the Greg Mortimer is designed with plenty of dedicated observation spaces - ideal for keen bird spotters, wildlife watchers and those wanting to watch the scenery go past. From the indoor 180-degree lounge and outdoor 360-degree open deck, both

on deck 8, to the 270-degree open sundeck on level 7, there are plenty of observation points to share around the ship! If these are full, then you can take up a spot on one of the two hydraulic viewing platforms on deck 5. Aurora Expeditions also has an open bridge policy, which means at any point you can come up to the bridge and check out what the captain and officers are up to. From watching navigational practices to observing mapping techniques, you can get a firsthand look at the inner workings of the Greg Mortimer. Shore excursions Although the ship is fun, the real enjoyment comes from the many shore excursions that are available. Depending on the weather and itinerary, it's possible to take two to three landings daily, taking a look at everything from rock formations and ancient ruins to cute groups of penguins. We know time is of the essence in these wild locations, so the Greg Mortimer has been designed with 15 Zodiacs, which means you can maximise your time on shore. From four dedicated sea level launching platforms, transfers are quicker, safer and enable you to get closer to the action for a longer period of time. Just remember to charge your camera before you step onto the Zodiac! Activity options From kayaking and skiing to diving and climbing, these are one-in-a-lifetime opportunities that you need to take advantage of. Aboard the Greg Mortimer there is a specially designed launching platform for all activities, a concept overseen by our activity experts. This area also includes individual lockers in the expansive mudroom and rapid drying areas for wetsuits so you can quickly get warm after exploring in the elements! Dining From the moment you step onto the Greg Mortimer, we aim to give you the best hospitality service possible. Starting with the official Captain's welcome, as our guests, you're welcome to 24 hours complimentary coffee, tea and snack facilities in addition to the range of different menu

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options and courses for each meal. Meals are served in large dining room/restaurant with family style dining, perfect to swap stories with your new expedition family. Enjoy the range of house wine, beers and soft drinks included with dinner after a long day in the wild, preparing yourself for another exciting day to follow. On the last day of your trip, the team on the Greg Mortimer put on a special farewell four-course dinner and cocktails - a perfect way to reflect on your time on the ship and consolidate lifelong friendships with the people you've met on-board. On-board entertainment When you're relaxing during a sea day or you have a little downtime on the ship between excursions, what is there to do onboard the Greg Mortimer? Plenty! On all our expeditions, there are experts who lead presentations in the spacious lecture room so you can understand the region a little better. These often include topics as broad as history and culture to biology and climate change, these presentations aim to educate and entertain. If you're keen to just watch the surroundings and keep your eyes peeled for wildlife, you have access to two bars/lounges where the stunning floor to ceiling windows offer a special perspective on the landscape. The Greg Mortimer is also decked out with other facilities for your enjoyment. There is a library on Deck 5 with books and maps and a Wellness Centre complete with gym equipment, sauna and spa. Feeling a little sore after walking around all day? Treat yourself to a massage at the Wellness Centre and feels the aches disappear! Keen photographers and artists will revel in the multimedia room



on Deck 5.



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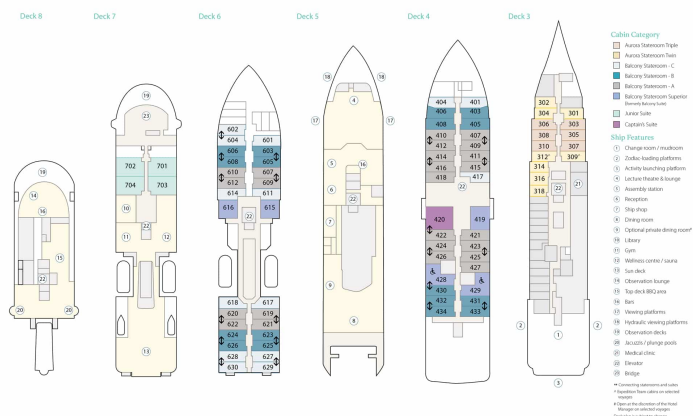


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INSIDE YOUR SHIP

The Greg Mortimer Deck Plan



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PRICING



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