

TOUR OF SCOTLAND

West-Coast-Explorer *Islay, Iona, Mull & Skye* *8 Days tour*

Travel to the tune of Scottish traditions on this wide-ranging tour of Scotland. **Roam the majestic Skye and explore the north's rolling mountains on this tour from Edinburgh.**



Itinerary :-

Day 1 – Depart Edinburgh to Oban

You escape the city of Edinburgh and head straight for the Highlands. Your first stop of the day is in the Trossachs National Park. Here, you can admire Scotland's scenic beauty and enjoy some local delicacies.

Your driver-guide may regale you with tales from Scottish folklore as you travel through the mountainous landscapes of the Western Highlands to Oban.

This port town was once the strategic heartland of great feuding clans. But today, Oban is famous for seafood sourced fresh off the boats. It also boasts its own distillery where you can sample whisky that's been perfected for 200 years. Here, you will have time to enjoy a dram and indulge in delicious local seafood for lunch.

You then venture through the Kilmartin Glen where you see standing stones and strongholds that are over 1,500 years old.

At Kennacraig, you catch the evening ferry to Islay. The sail is around two hours; and if you peek out to the ocean, you may see the Paps of Jura. These mountains mark the way to Islay, Queen of the Hebrides.

Once you've arrived on the island, you settle into your accommodation in Bowmore.

Day 2 – Islay

Today you explore Islay's beautiful viewpoints, white sand beaches, and famous whiskies.

In the morning you enjoy a tour of Bowmore, the oldest licenced distillery on the island.

Your driver-guide takes you to Ardnahoe Distillery for a tour and a lunch of local treats.

This modern distillery is the passion project of the Laings, a family who have loved whisky for generations. Today, you can admire their vision, craftsmanship, and unique spirit.

Your next stop of the day is at Kilchoman Distillery. This is a proud and independent whisky-maker whose tastes are as bold as their environmental ethos. You have time for a tour and whisky tasting here, before a walk down the beautiful white beach that lies close by.

You head back to Bowmore where you can either stumble back to your room for the night or relax and explore the village.

Day 3 – Southern Side of Islands

Today you explore the southern side of the island, home to a few of the most famous whiskies in all of Scotland: Laphroaig, Lagavulin, and Ardbeg.

After you've made it out of bed and eaten your breakfast, you visit Ardbeg. You stay here for a tour, tasting, and lunch. The restaurant here is a beautiful place to relax and enjoy fine Scottish produce as you sip upon delightful drams.

You then visit Laphroaig. This 200-year-old whisky distiller is a favourite with the British royal family and bears the seal of the Prince of Wales to prove it.

Throughout the day, your driver-guide takes you to historical spots such as the ruins of Kildalton church and Dunyvaig Castle. And you can also stop at Lagavulin for some intensively flavoured, rich and smoky whisky.

You return to Bowmore for your last evening of the trip.



Day 4 – Oban

This morning, you take the ferry back to the mainland and replace the intoxicating fumes of whisky with the replenishing fresh air of Scotland's West Highlands.

You travel through coastal scenery to the beautiful village of Inveraray on the banks of Loch Fyne. The town is adorned with historic buildings, old boats, and a great whisky shop.

Here you'll join a new bus for the continuation of your tour to Oban. Your guides will help you transfer your luggage and introduce you to your new travelling companions.

Once you arrive in Oban, you'll have a free evening to enjoy this bustling Highland town.

You can absorb the atmosphere and visit the local pubs. Or, if you prefer to explore the area, hike uphill and admire the views from the most photographed structure in the west, McCaig's Tower. Built in 1897 on instruction by a local banker, it resembles the Colosseum in Rome and provides magnificent vistas over the distant Firth of Lorne.

You will stay in this glorious Highland town for two nights.

Day 5 – Mull

Today you have an early start, beginning the day crossing on the ferry to Mull for a chance to explore dramatic coastlines and wild beauty.

You take the small ferry to Iona, birthplace of Celtic Christianity, and ancient burial ground of Scottish Kings. Here you can visit the historic abbey with its intricate carved crosses in the churchyard, or explore rocky headlands and sandy coves.

There's an opportunity to take a small boat for an **optional trip to the island of Staffa** and view the dramatic basalt columns immortalised by Mendelssohn in his Hebridean Overture "Fingal's Cave".

You then return on the ferry to Oban for your second night.

Day 6 – Appin

You ramble north along the west coast around Appin, passing the impregnable Castle Stalker. Next you head to the gorgeous Glencoe, one of the most famous natural landmarks in all of Scotland. This beautiful area boasts steep slopes and photogenic peaks. Your driver-guide may reveal to you the tragic tale that's haunted this valley for over 300 years.

You then venture through Fort William and under the shadow of Ben Nevis, which at 1,344 meters is the highest mountain in the British Isles.

We continue through the Great Glen, a natural fault in the earth's crust that runs through Scotland. From here, you travel north to the picturesque fishing village of Plockton. You're dropped off at your accommodation in the early evening.

Day 7 – Isle of Skye

Today is a very flexible day on Skye. There are many possibilities depending on the weather and your driver-guide will use their local knowledge to decide on the best day out for the group.

You may ascend the Quiraing along Trotternish Ridge and be rewarded with spectacular views. Alternatively, you could drink in the scenery at Loch Corruisk or drive through the dramatic Red Cuillin to the little hamlet of Elgol.

We return you to your accommodation in Plockton in the late afternoon for you to enjoy a free evening in the village.

Day 8 – Loch Ness

You're collected from your accommodation for the short drive to the famous stronghold of Eilean Donan Castle.

Then, you travel east taking in the stunning views over Loch Duich and the Five Sisters of Kintail. You continue on to Loch Ness for lunch and the possibility of spotting "Nessie".

Your tour moves through the Grampian Mountains and along Loch Laggan, before passing Dalwhinnie, home to Scotland's highest whisky distillery.

In Perthshire, you stop for refreshments before heading back to Edinburgh past Perth and over the Firth of Forth.

COME HOME WITH WONDERFUL MEMORIES OF THE TOUR!

Inclusions

1. Travel on 16 seat Mercedes mini-coach the local way on small group tours
2. All ferry fares except the optional trip to Staffa
3. Accommodation in 3 star Hotels for Oban and Plockton
4. Accommodation for 3 nights in Islay* (notes below)
5. Sightseeing as mentioned but no entrance fee
6. The stories and services of an English-speaking driver-guide

*On this part of the tour we reserve you rooms in the beautiful Bowmore Distillery Cottages.

The cottages have between three and six twin bedrooms. Due to the shared nature of the accommodation, individual bedrooms don't have lockable doors. The kitchen and

lounge facilities are shared with other passengers, and basic self-service breakfast ingredients are provided. Full Scottish breakfasts are available at the nearby hotels if you prefer, payable locally. Rooms at the cottages are limited and are reserved on a first come first served basis. When these rooms are full, we book you into a nearby bed and breakfast.

Exclusions

1. International Air tickets and taxes
2. Edinburgh tour and stay
3. Visas
4. Travel Insurance
5. Entrance fees at sightseeing
6. Any item of personal nature
7. 5% GST