

5 Days/4 Nights

Departs Selected Dates Apr.-Oct. from Edinburgh



Orkney and Scotland's Northern Coast

Escape to the rugged northern coastline, the mysterious Loch Ness, the Caledonian forests of Cairngorm National Park, and the magical beauty of the Orkney archipelago. You'll unearth some of the most well-preserved prehistoric sites in Europe, including castles, Nordic ruins, and a famous battle site. You'll also have a chance to find the Loch Ness Monster, and explore the beautiful red sandstone coast, while learning about the vibrant culture of these remote island communities.

ACCOMMODATIONS

- 4 Nights Accommodations at B&B or 3* Hotel

INCLUSIONS

- All Ground Transfers via 16-Passenger Minicoach
- Daily Touring with Professional Guide
- Daily Breakfast (other meals payable locally)



EDINBURGH:

Meet your guide at the Edinburgh Bus station located at St Andrew's Square at 8:30am (pre-night required). You'll head towards Stirling, passing historic Stirling Castle and the William Wallace Monument. You'll also view Doune Castle (site of Monty Python's Holy Grail.) before stopping in the small town of Callander for

refreshments. You'll cross over the fault line into the magnificent Highlands, taking in the splendor of Loch Luibnaig, Loch Earn, Glen Ogle and Glen Dochart. Continuing north, we travel over the wild and remote Rannoch Moor into Glencoe. The stunning views and spectacular landscapes of the super (extinct) volcano and scene of the infamous massacre of the Clan MacDonald in 1692, are not to be missed.

A stop at the imposing mountain Glen is included so you can snap some pictures and enjoy the spectacular views. You continue north up the Great Glen to the mysterious beauty of Loch Ness, traveling the entire 23 miles of the famous Loch; plenty of time to try and spot Nessie! Arriving in Inverness, you will be dropped off at your booked accommodation. The remainder of the day is at your leisure to explore this compact, cosmopolitan city on the banks of River Ness. .

(Accommodations, Inverness)

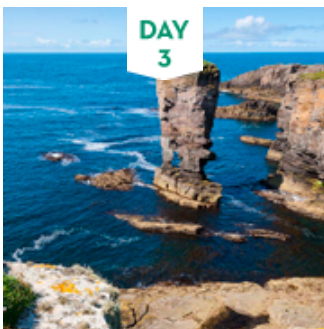


INVERNESS TO ORKNEY:

After a hearty Scottish breakfast, it's an early start as we leave behind Inverness, crossing over the Black Isle, and past Andrew Carnegie's Skibo Castle. From here we drive through the northeast Highland coastline, traveling into some of Scotland's most dramatic scenery. Enjoy amazing views of some of Europe's oldest landscapes and the chance to see wildlife, such as golden eagles and red deer. Soon we arrive at Scotland's most northerly point of mainland Britain; John o' Groats, and then to Gills Bay, where we'll board the ferry, crossing the Pentland Firth into the Orkney Archipelago.

From here it's a short drive to the famous Italian Chapel, built during WWII by Italian POW's. After a visit, we continue to the former Viking stronghold of Kirkwall, the capital of Orkney. Enjoy the sights, including the magnificent St. Magnus Cathedral, shopping along the historic winding streets, and maybe sample a wee dram at the Highland Park Distillery; of what the Scots call "their water of life" .

(Breakfast, Inverness; Accommodations, Kirkwall)



ORKNEY:

Today you'll explore this fantastic, ancient island; a land of contrasts where fertile green pastures are fringed by shores of golden sands washed by waters of the North Sea and Atlantic Ocean. You'll visit the 5000 year old village of Skara Brae (older than the Pyramids of Egypt!), the mystical prehistoric stone circle at Brodgar, and the Druidic standing stones of Stenness. Then you'll have a brief stop in Stromness, one of Scotland's most picturesque seaboard villages. You'll continue onto Maeshowe, where in the 12th Century the Vikings left one of the largest collections of Norse runic inscriptions. Later in the day, you'll return to Kirkwall.

(Breakfast, Accommodations, Kirkwall)



ORKNEY TO ULLAPOOL:

After breakfast, you'll depart Orkney and sail the Viking waters back to the mainland. From here you travel the old road right across the very top of Scotland, driving past the golden sand beaches of their northern coastline. You then visit the far northwest highlands, passing Ben Loyal, Ben Hope, Durness, and Assynt, before stopping to view the 15th century ruins of Ardvreck Castle. The scenery along the way is among the most dramatic in all of Scotland. From here, it's a short distance to Ullapool, staying overnight in this quaint, whitewashed fishing village.

(Breakfast, Kirkwall; Accommodations, Ullapool)



ULLAPOOL TO EDINBURGH:

Leaving Ullapool behind you, take in the drama of the River Droma as it plunges 197 ft (60 meters) down into Corrieshalloch Gorge. Just outside of Inverness, you'll visit Culloden Moor, the site of The Battle of Culloden in 1746. The pitched battle was an attempt to reinstate a Stuart monarch on the throne of Britain, and is today considered one of the most significant clashes in British history. We'll take a short drive to the ancient standing stones at Clava Cairns, made famous by Diana Gabaldon in the "Outlander" books. This prehistoric and stunning Bronze Age burial ground is one of the oldest in Scotland. From here you travel through the ancient Caledonian Pine Forest, hugging the Cairngorm Mountain Range. Enjoy lunch in these beautiful surroundings before traveling through big tree country of Perthshire and the Kingdom of Fife. Later in the day, you'll return to Edinburgh and on to your next Avanti Destination!

(Breakfast, Ullapool)
