

## IRELAND AND SCOTLAND

DAY 1

### EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND

Arrive in Edinburgh and transfer to your luxury hotel..

DAY 2

### EDINBURGH | EXCITING CAPITAL CITY

After breakfast and a morning at leisure, join a panoramic tour of Scotland's capital city, vibrant Edinburgh. Explore Edinburgh Castle with your expert local guide and take in inspiring city views. Later, board your sleek expedition vessel and set sail on the Firth of Forth. Join fellow guests on deck and, conditions permitting, view Bass Rock, home to the world's largest gannet colony, as well as the Isle of May, home to over 285 species of birds.

DAY 3

### INVERGORDON | MAJESTIC SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS

The northern part of Scotland is legendary for its dramatic, windswept mountains, wooded hills and historic significance. Today, explore the magnificent Highlands, choosing from experiences that include an expertly guided visit of the Scottish Highlands capital of Inverness, a private cruise on mythic Loch Ness and exploration of Urquhart Castle, a moving experience at the site of the epic Battle of Culloden, or a visit and whisky tasting at Glenmorangie Distillery.

DAY 4

### ORKNEY ISLANDS | KIRKWALL & THE RING OF BRODGAR

Rich in Viking heritage and UNESCO-designated sites, the landscapes of the Orkneys run the gamut from rolling hills dotted with wild flowers to dramatic cliffs inhabited by seabirds to frothy waves and sea caves. A choice of excursions reveals the archipelago's many stories, including exploration of historic Kirkwall or a visit to the 5,000-year-old Skara Brae, one of the best-preserved Stone Age settlements in Western Europe. You may also visit the spine-tingling Ring of Brodgar, a ceremonial circle of ancient standing stones dating to 2700 BC. Perched on a strip of land bordered by both salt and fresh water, see 27 of the original 60 stones set in a precise circle at six degrees apart. Before dinner this evening aboard your luxury expedition cruiser, enjoy a recap and fascinating lectures with our Expedition Team.

DAY 5

### OUTER HEBRIDES | PREHISTORIC WESTERN ISLES

The Western Isles of Scotland offer outstanding scenery with wild and windswept beaches, towering peaks and peat moors. The main islands include the moorlands of Lewis and the mountains of Harris, each with its own Gaelic dialect. Choose a drive through the moorlands to the archaeological site of the ancient Calanais Standing



Stones, Scotland's own "Stonehenge," and a visit to Arnol Blackhouse, a traditional thatched house where Gaelic-speaking locals reveal the island's crofting traditions. Alternatively, you may opt for a drive on the Golden Road with stops to visit a Harris tweed weaver, as well as a local gin and whisky distillery. Continue to a clifftop at the edge of the Outer Hebrides showcasing stunning views and wildlife.

DAY 6

## OUTER HEBRIDES | SEA STACKS OF ST. KILDA

For more than 2,000 years and until 1930, the St. Kilda islands were inhabited by an isolated community. Today, the preserved settlement reveals cleits, beehive-shaped cells of rough stone that served as larders and storerooms. Explore this UNESCO World Heritage Site, designated for both its natural and cultural significance. Admire the staggering cliffs and sea stacks that define the islands. Visit Hirta, the largest island with the highest cliffs in all of Britain. Among the most important seabird breeding colonies in Northwest Europe, the cliffs provide refuge for more than 200 species, including fulmars and shags.

DAY 7

## INNER HEBRIDES | GREEN JEWELS OF STAFFA & IONA

The approach to Staffa by sea is breathtaking, with great basalt columns flanking the deep caves of the island. Keep an eye out for dolphins, basking sharks and minke whales, which can be seen during the warmer months. Excursions ashore lead you to the wonders of Fingal, a sea cave formed by hexagonally jointed basalt. Continue cruising to the tranquil island of Iona, where you discover Iona Abbey, an ancient center of Gaelic monasticism.

DAY 8

## DONEGAL, IRELAND | UNSPOILED COAST

Though a small island nation, Ireland is packed with stunning landscapes, welcoming locals, and a wealth of history and culture. Your introduction to the island begins near Donegal at Killybegs, with its broken coastline of deep-sea inlets and sandy beaches, spectacular mountains and blanket bog. Today, join a guided walking tour of Donegal or a drive to the countryside to witness the iconic Slieve League Mountains and an impressive waterfall. Fans of legendary writer William Butler Yeats and his brother Jack Yeats, an accomplished painter, may choose to visit their hometown of Sligo. In "Yeats Country," experience the landscapes and beaches that inspired their artistry, a memorable poetry reading at the Yeats Society and the gravesite of the poet himself. For another option, cross into Northern Ireland and spend the day in the walled city of Londonderry, site of 1972's "Bloody Sunday."

DAY 9

## GALWAY | TRADITIONAL CITY & CLIFFS OF MÖHER

Today, arrive in the lively city of Galway with its narrow streets, colorful houses and thriving arts community. Choose from excursions that take you on an artisan culinary walking tour with a tutored tasting of Irish whiskeys or to the Burren — the largest karst landscape in Europe — for a botanist-guided experience and local sheep



farm visit. You may also opt for a day in Ireland's breathtaking Connemara region with its jagged, filigreed shoreline. Later today, admire the ravishing, picture-perfect Cliffs of Moher.

DAY 10

## KELLIG MICHAEL | FANTASTIC PEAKS OF THE ATLANTIC

Early this morning, you may have the opportunity to see breathtaking Skellig Michael, a UNESCO-designated site whose extreme remoteness has preserved it almost unchanged. Its sandstone pyramids were home to some of the earliest monastic settlements in Ireland; today, they provide sanctuary to fantastic birdlife, including puffins. The dizzying Skellig Michael (also known as Great Skellig) also doubled as Luke Skywalker's Jedi Temple in the *Star Wars* saga. Later today, arrive at historic Bantry and set off on a leisurely walk and guided visits to its historic churches or to stately Bantry House's magnificent gardens.

DAY 11

## AT SEA | ACROSS THE CELTIC SEA

Relish a day at sea, taking in the views from the outer decks or from your own private balcony. Enjoy relaxed time with new friends and your Expedition Team, including additional lectures and conversations to enrich your discoveries.

DAY 12-13

## LONDON | CITY OF STRIKING LANDMARKS

Bid farewell to your Captain and crew as you approach the White Cliffs of Dover and disembark for the next chapter of your adventure. Before heading to London, choose from various options, such as a visit to Canterbury and its prestigious Cathedral, or Leeds Castle, the property of six English queens during the 13th to 15th centuries. You may also opt for a stop at Chartwell, former home of Winston Churchill. Following lunch, transfer to the heart of London and check into your luxury hotel, where you have dinner tonight. The next day, embark on a full day of exploration in this bustling city. Your choice of excursions includes a panoramic tour showcasing eye-popping landmarks, such as the Tower of London and Kensington Palace, a visit to Westminster Abbey and a London Eye experience. Alternately, join: a visit to Buckingham Palace; a culinary experience spanning Portobello Road Market in Notting Hill, sampling delicacies and enjoying lunch with a former executive chef to the Royal Family; or a journey back in time with a visit to the Churchill War Rooms and the Imperial War Museums.

DAY 14

## DEPART LONDON

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for your flight home

