

# HEBRIDES & LOFOTEN ISLANDS

## Expedition Cruise from Dublin to Tromso



Discover four archipelagos on the same cruise: the Hebrides, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands of Scotland, and the Lofoten Islands of Norway, plus a fjord visit to Geiranger.



**DATE:** MAY 13-24, 2019

**DURATION:** 12-DAYS/11-NIGHTS

**EMBARK:** DUBLIN, IRELAND  
**DISEMBARK:** TROMSO, NORWAY

**SHIP:** L'AUSTRAL

**FROM:** \$7,900\*

\*After Early Booking Savings

\*SAVE 15% - Book Early - Limited time  
**FREE AIR - TROMSO TO PARIS**

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Outings and shore visits in Zodiac® inflatables with a team of experienced naturalist guides.
- Possibility of hikes.
- Discovery of four archipelagos on the same cruise: the Hebrides, Orkney Islands, Shetland Islands, Lofoten Islands.
- Very rich wildlife: multiple species of birds (puffins, sea eagles, terns, northern gannets, red-billed choughs, corn crakes), whales, dolphins, seals, otters.
- Diversity of landscapes: heathland undulating as far as the eye can see, flowers, immense beaches, small lakes, forests of hundred-year-old oak trees, huge cliffs, basalt grottos, Norwegian fjords.
- Sailing in Geirangerfjord and Trollfjorden.
- UNESCO World Heritage Sites: St Kilda islands in the Outer Hebrides, Geirangerfjord, Dublin.

## ITINERARY

### DAY 1 — MON 13 MAY — DUBLIN — EMBARK

The Irish capital stretches along the banks of the Liffey to Dublin bay, on the East coast of Ireland. Discover Ireland's warm conviviality in the pedestrian district of **Temple Bar**. Its cobbled streets are brimming with fabulous shops, pubs and arts centres. Next to Trinity College, famous for its 18th century library, you can stroll along Grafton Street: in one of its famous tea shops, try a delicious scone and clotted cream served hot and melt-in-the-mouth with jam. Not far from here, the majestic O'Connell bridge leads you to the avenue with the same name, on which **Spire**, a luminous contemporary sculpture presides.

### DAY 2 - TUE 14 MAY — PORTRUSH — ISLE OF ISLAY

Portrush is adjacent to the stunning North Antrim coastline. Here lies the medieval Dunluce Castle ruins. Perched picturesquely at the edge of a rocky outcropping high above the sea, the castle is dramatically surrounded by terrifyingly steep drops, which the early Christians and Vikings would have considered a very important security feature. The castle and surrounding areas have been frequently used for the filming of "Game of Thrones". Another attraction reached from Portrush is the Giant's Causeway - 40,000 hexagonal basalt columns that descend in a kind of pathway to the sea.



### DAY 3 – WED 15 MAY – IONA - ISLE OF STAFFA, HEBRIDES

Of all the islands in the **Inner Hebrides**, **Iona** is by far the most conducive to contemplation and meditation. And for good reason... it is here that St Columba landed from Ireland in 563 and undertook to establish Christianity in **Scotland**. Now an abbey, the island's true spiritual centre stands where the ancient monastery founded by the Irish missionary was built. Many kings of Scotland, including the legendary **Macbeth**, are buried in the nearby cemetery. In sunny weather, arriving on the Isle of Iona is a stunningly beautiful experience.



Owned by the National Trust for Scotland since 1986, **Staffa Island** is famous for the basalt columns that emerged 60 million years ago as a natural consequence of the lava flows fracturing into hexagonal blocks as they cooled down. The uninhabited island is home to a large colony of puffins. As majestic as any cathedral, **Fingal's Cave** is an unforgettable experience and you'll doubtless be as impressed as **Mendelssohn** was. If you've got a musical ear, you may just get inspired too...

#### DAY 4 – THU 16 MAY – SAINT KILDA ISLAND, HEBRIDES

St Kilda is a remarkable uninhabited archipelago some 40 nautical miles beyond the Outer Hebrides. The stunning cliffs and sea stacks are home to the most important seabird breeding colony in northwest Europe. St Kilda is one of the few places in the world to have received dual world heritage status from UNESCO in recognition of its natural heritage and cultural significance. Village Bay on the island of Hirta once supported a population of over 200, but the last islanders left in the 1930s.

#### DAY 5 – FRI 17 MAY - JOHN O'GROATS, SCOTLAND

#### DAY 6 – SAT 18 MAY – KIRKWALL, ORKNEY - SOUTH SHETLAND ISLANDS

Capital of the **Orkney archipelago, Kirkwall**, which means “church bay”, is an ideal stopover before continuing on to the **Northern Isles**. Sheltered in a wide bay, the lively town welcomes the visitor with its charming paved alleyways edged by old houses and craft shops. **Tankerness House**, the oldest homestead in the town, is a must-see landmark. But the true architectural treasure of the aptly named Kirkwall is none other than its remarkable red and gold stone cathedral. And because whisky is inseparable from Scotland’s identity, stop at the Highland Park Distillery for a highly instructive visit.

#### DAY 7 – SUN 19 MAY – GEIRANGER, NORWAY

A must-see stopover in Norway, located halfway between Bergen and Trondheim, **Geiranger** offers the stunning beauty of a natural decor, listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site. The splendor of the sheer cliffs, dark rock and crystalline water are the stars of the show here. The sides of the fjord offer many possibilities for hiking: the **Eagle’s Road** takes you up to a steep stretch offering a gorgeous panoramic view. A visit to **Geiranger** village will immerse you in the rhythm of life in the little local community.

#### DAY 8 – MON 20 MAY – AT SEA



#### DAY 9 – TUE 21 MAY – LEKNES, LOFOTEN, NORWAY

Way beyond the Arctic Circle, Lofoten Islands are truly considered to be in “another world”. A jewel of nature in its most pristine state, this archipelago with its jagged coastline offers you majestic settings of high alpine summits, sandy beaches, green prairies and fjords of a deep blue, where countless bird colonies make their nests. Whether you visit Å, or Nusjford, listed by UNESCO, enjoy authentic and memorable moments.

#### DAY 10 – WED 22 MAY - SVOLVAER, LOFOTEN

Located on the island of Austvågøy, in the county of Nordland, **Svolvær** will be your ideal entry point for discovering the **Lofoten islands**. An important stopover to the north of Norway, fishing is one of the town’s main features. And its speciality is? Cod. A picturesque white Lutheran church rests atop a hillside ridge, overlooking the town's multi-coloured houses. Still higher, the “**The Solvær Goat**” mountain looks over the town from its rocky heights. Topped with two peaks like the horns of an animal, it is one of the region’s must-see natural attractions.

#### DAY 11 – THU 23 MAY - SAILING IN TROLLFJORDEN

According to legend, trolls were the guardians of this 2-km long fjord accessible via the Raftsund Strait, between the Vesterålen Archipelago and the Lofoten Islands. Dominated on both sides by **vertical rock faces** that stand up to 1,000 metres high in parts, **Trollfjorden** welcomes you in a **magical atmosphere** which its narrowness helps to create. During this unforgettable journey, you will indeed have the impression that you’re grazing the surrounding mountains and that you’ll never see the end of this marine cul-de-sac. After a delicate U-turn, your ship will finally head back in the opposite direction: this will perhaps be the opportunity to observe, for want of trolls, **seals** and **eagles**, which are often present in this site, unique on earth.

#### DAY 12 – FRI 24 MAY – TROMSO, NORWAY – DISEMBARK

In the north of the Arctic circle You’ll discover Tromsø, a secluded town located in the county of Troms. Norwegians call it the “Paris of the north”. You’ll soon see why when you discover its extensive neoclassical architectural heritage. A stunning example is the **Arctic cathedral**, a major monument whose stylistic purity echoes the outline of the mountains surrounding the town.

**We can arrange pre- and post-cruise tour programs for you – see more while you are here!**



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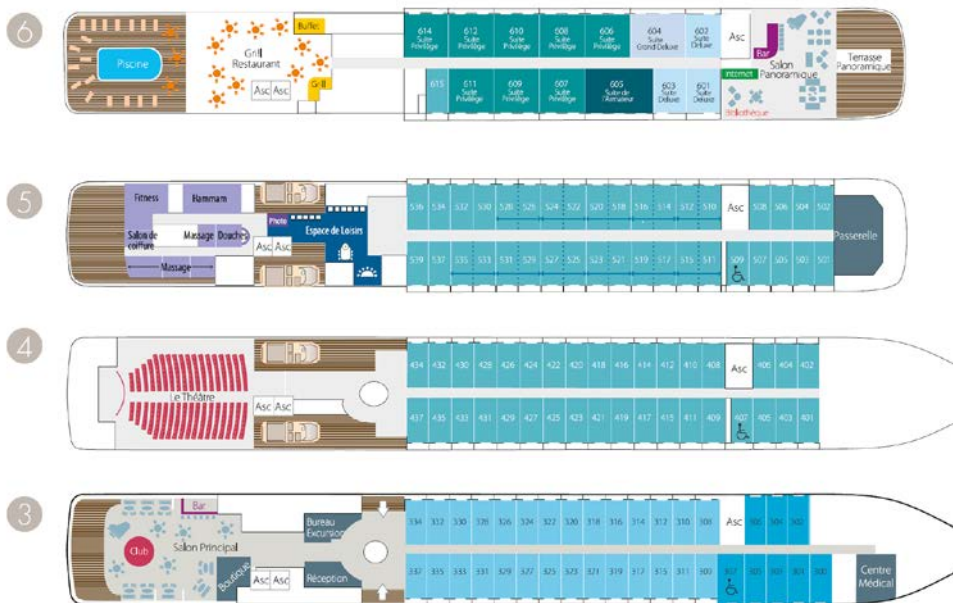
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