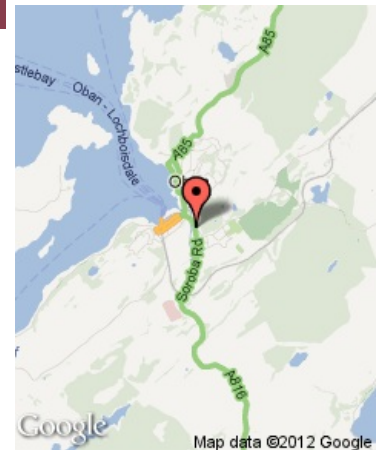


Hebridean Wildlife Cruise



Highlights

Tour the UK's wild north-west on this Hebridean wildlife cruise. You'll have a chance to explore a host of islands, including – weather permitting – the enigmatic St. Kilda, whilst enjoying frequent sightings of the region's diverse wildlife.

An area of outstanding natural beauty, the Hebrides are world-renowned for their extraordinary diversity of animal and birdlife, including dolphins, minke whales, porpoises, seals, gannets and golden eagles. Among the myriad cliffs and coves flows the warm Gulf Stream, which can afford this remote corner of the British Isles a tropical, other-worldly feel, complete with vertical sea-cliffs teeming with bird-life, exotic gardens and the sporadic enchantment of the Northern Lights.

The stunning islands of Mull, Canna, Mingulay, the Shiant Islands and the incomparable St. Kilda, a UNESCO World Heritage site are some of the possible destinations on this Hebridean Cruise. For the energetic there is plenty of opportunity to don your hiking boots and explore the islands on foot. Every port of call has something different, be it a precariously-perched castle, an abandoned township or an historic harbour.

If you're a serious walker you can head for the hills with a packed lunch fit for Robert the Bruce, or for the more sedate among us you can while away the hours on deck with a book, counting the cormorants. Evenings may find your vessel moored in a tranquil sea loch, where you can enjoy a three-course dinner by moonlight or tranquil sunset. Or maybe you'll pop ashore for a nip of whiskey in a local pub (ceilidh dancing optional!). The itinerary is flexible and the skipper is happy to hear suggestions if there's any particular sites or wildlife you want to see. For a detailed view of the holiday read our [expert review](#).

Is it for me?

We think everyone should see the Hebrides at least once in their lifetime. However, if you're a family with young children or are not fit, active and mobile (no upper age limit though) then a small ship cruise is probably not the best option for you. As on any boating holiday you'll be living in close quarters with the other guests, with shared meals and excursions no en-suite facilities. This said, past passengers often comment on the good banter and sense of camaraderie onboard – many guests remain friends long after the ship's returned to port. And if you do want some time to yourself you can relax in your comfortable cabin or head ashore for some awesome hiking. Most guests on these cruises are couples or friends, but individuals are welcome too, so long as they don't mind potentially sharing with another (same sex) passenger. The itinerary on most cruises is fairly flexible, so if you've got any specialist interests – puffins, lighthouses, whiskey, etc.! - the crew will try to accommodate them.

Accommodation

The Hjalmar Bjorge is a fully refurbished 23m ex-Norwegian ice-class rescue vessel, large enough to offer some serious luxury, yet small enough to drop anchor in the most remote lochs and bays – the parts other cruise ships can't reach! On board, the friendly crew is on hand to provide some hearty fine dining and tales of local history (or gossip depending which way you look at it!). Whether you're thirsty for local knowledge or hungry for some peace and quiet, this Hebridean cruise is the perfect way to explore the UK's wild north-west.

Itinerary

Prices from

495 GBP (4-9 days) per person

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Hebrides cruises vary from shorter four day cruises in the Inner Hebrides in spring and autumn to week long cruises and an extended 9 day Outer Hebrides Cruise. Due to the varied weather conditions there is no fixed itinerary, with the route being chosen to suit the prevailing conditions:

4 Day Inner Hebrides Spring Cruise

A gentle early season cruise taking advantage of the natural shelter of the islands on a stabilized motor vessel, perfect if you've never tried this kind of thing before. April is frequently crisp and bright with no midges this early on. Walks planned daily. Birds and possibly some early cetaceans could be spotted.

4 Day Inner Hebrides Autumn Cruise

A gentle late season cruise taking advantage of the natural shelter of the islands. Very easy going, ideal if you've never done this kind of thing before. Enjoy the last of summer and stunning scenery of autumn. Walks, cetaceans and a very small possibility of seeing the Northern Lights.

6 Day Inner Hebrides Summer Cruise

Gentle Hebridean cruise taking advantage of the natural shelter of the islands. Walks planned daily. Early summer is a great time of year for seabirds, raptors and the possibility of early cetaceans. Late summer is a great time for cetaceans plus eagles and some seabirds at sea.

6 Day St Kilda Cruise

An adventurous expedition aiming to enable guests to spend a few whole days walking on Hirta, the main island of St Kilda (with packed lunch provided). Tour of the other islands and stacs. Visit to at least one other remote island. Huge numbers of seabirds plus cetaceans.

Guests arrive at Oban for around 1600 with vessel Hjalmar Bjorge departing in the late afternoon for Tobermory, Canna or Neist Point. An early start the next day should, weather permitting, ensure arrival at the remote archipelago of St Kilda by the second day. In exceptional circumstances an overnight crossing may be made directly from our home port. Again, weather permitting up to three days or so will be spent here, exploring the main island of Hirta (with picnic lunches provided for all day walks) and viewing the other islands and stacks in the group – Dun, Soay, Stac Lee, Boreray and Stac an Armin. The journey back will be less intense with time ashore at perhaps Mingulay and Tobermory on the Isle of Mull. Please note St Kilda is not guaranteed and the journey, if undertaken, may be rough. On the final day we head back into Oban for your departure after brunch or lunch.

9 Day Outer Hebrides Cruise

A varied cruise aiming to deliver an interesting mix of Hebridean islands including - weather permitting - St Kilda. Visit a wide range of destinations for daily walks and a good variety of seabirds and cetaceans.

The itinerary is dependent on weather, but may include, for example, some of the following islands: Mull, the Small Isles (Rum, Canna, Eigg and Muck), Skye, Coll and Tiree in the Inner Hebrides. In the Outer Hebrides possibilities include the Shiant, Eriskay, Barra Head, Mingulay, Vatersay, Taransay, Scarp and the Monach Islands, etc. If weather permits you may visit St Kilda but this is not guaranteed. Occasionally the Flannan Islands may be visited. Expect sea and golden eagles, cetaceans and lots of seabirds such as gannets, guillemots and razorbills.

Details

Getting there

The cruise departs from Oban, which is easily reached by rail or car. The mainline rail station is literally yards from dock. If driving, free parking is available during your holiday in Oban.

Price includes

Price includes accommodation and all meals (breakfast, lunch, tea and dinner). Cans and alcoholic drinks are available onboard at a modest price. Price does not include transport to and from Oban

Comfort level

Reasonably comfortable (Inns, B&Bs, luxury camping etc.)

Experience required

A reasonable interest is all that is needed

Travellers should bring

An interest in wildlife and wild places

Reviews (1)

Reviews of this experience

“ A superb wildlife cruise. This is really less about the cruise and more about the beautiful islands, the walking and great company. The food on-board is superb and comes in seriously hearty proportions. There is loads of time to explore the Islands independently, but skipper Mark was always on hand to point out a great hiking route or interesting diversion. I failed to spot much marine life but saw some fantastic bird-life, including the incredible sea eagle. Read our review in [full here](#) ”



ben

reviewing Hebridean Wildlife Cruise