

THE CLASSIC SCOTLAND ISLAND HOPPING WHISKY TRAIL

Introduction

- **11 Days / 10 Nights**
- **Any Day Start**
- **First Class Hotels**
- **Standard Group Size 1 - 8**

The Scottish Islands stretch from the Shetlands in the far north, just 6 degrees south of the Arctic Circle, to the remote Western Isles, made from some of the oldest rocks on Earth. The dramatic landscapes are divided by countless rivers and lochs and the western coasts are edged by miles of sandy beaches. Man has been here for over 6,000 years, living off the sea and thin soil. Orkney was part of the kingdom of Norway until 1469 and many of the Isles still retain elements of their Norse heritage. During the Viking festival of Up Helly AA in Lerwick, for example, the people of Orkney set fire to a replica Viking longship. The Scottish Isles have a remarkable wealth of prehistoric monuments which place them among Europe's most treasured archaeological sites.

The Scottish Islands contain some of the best distillers of single malt whiskies in the world. Set on remote islands and in hidden coves, the Island Whisky Trail will introduce you to some of the most beautiful and romantic scenery in the world.

Trip Profile

The aim of this tour is to give you a taste of the heritage and cultures of the Scottish Isles and a chance to visit the most remote malt whisky distilleries in Scotland.

You will have the opportunity to experience the whole process, from the malting and mashing to fermentation, distillation, maturation and bottling. Your tours will include tastings, often direct from the casks themselves. Many of the distilleries are in beautiful stunning locations and you will be able to explore the attractions and delights of the local villages and towns.

What's your favourite Whisky? Create Your Own Tour. As with all our tours, the attractions and distilleries you visit will take account of your interests and can be adapted to what you want to see.

Your tour may be planned to coincide with one of the Islay or Speyside whisky festivals which occur through the year. In addition, private tastings and cooking with whisky courses can be arranged in Dufftown, the Speyside capital of whisky.

Ferry times: This tour is dependent on many external ferries. This itinerary will need to be adjusted to take account of the times of each ferry.

Itinerary

Day One: Glasgow / Edinburgh to Speyside

We can start the tour from any of the major airports in Scotland or from Edinburgh, Aberdeen or Glasgow. Travelling up the whisky smuggler's route north to Speyside, our first stop will be **Edradour**, Scotland's smallest distillery, producing fine single malts on a farmhouse scale. From here, we will travel further north passing Blair Castle where the pipes of Bonnie Prince Charlie are on show. Eventually, we will arrive at the **Dalwhinnie** distillery, one of the highest at 1073 feet. We will stay overnight in the Speyside area, the home of Scottish whisky. Time permitting; we can visit the **Speyside Cooperage**. Since 1947, this family owned business has produced the finest casks from the best American Oak. The cooperage continues to work and produce the age-old product, still using traditional methods and tools.



Edradour distillery

Day Two: Speyside

The first distillery today is **The Macallan**. Founded in 1824, this whisky originally only matured in oak sherry casks brought to the distillery from Jerez in Spain. Now they produce the Fine oak series, with the whisky mellowed in bourbon oak casks. From here, we drive through the capital of northern Scotland – Inverness. If you would like to stop in the city, there are a couple of worthwhile attractions. About 20 miles north is **Dalmore** distilled in the small town of Alness. The River Alness runs through the town and the waters are used to produce its unique flavour – it is a Highland Malt.

Then tracking back south, our last distillery today is **Glen Ord**. This is the only remaining distillery on the Black Isle – not an island but a peninsula and one of the first areas of Scotland to be agriculturally improved. The whisky has won many international awards. Overnight Speyside.



Washbacks at Dalmore

Day Three: Speyside to Orkney

Today, travelling north along the dramatic east coast, our first stop is **Glenmorangie**, home of the biggest selling whisky in Scotland. This distiller uses their single malt to blend, mostly with Glen Moray to produce many supermarket own brands. Then to **Clynelish**, standing on a landscaped hillside near the fishing and golfing resort of Brora. Founded in 1819, it was hoped that the distillery would provide a steady market for the new farms along the coastal strip. Further up the east coast towards John O' Groats we stop at the **Old Pulteney**, the most northerly distillery on the mainland. It stands just a few yards from the harbour in the town of Wick, designed by Thomas Telford as a model fishing port. Here we sample the salty nut flavour of the malts. From here we travel to Scrabster to catch the evening ferry to Stromness, on Orkney.



East Coast Scenery

Day Four: Orkney to Mainland

This morning we can tour Orkney. This complex of islands is famous for its prehistoric monuments and Viking culture. We will start with the Norman cathedral of **St Magnus**, the Orkney's patron saint, before visiting some remarkable Neolithic treasures. Amongst the places you could see are, the chambered tomb of **Maes Howe** - the oldest stone house still standing in northern Europe. The **Knapp** at Howar - occupied from 3,500BC to 3,100BC or **Skara Brae** - a remarkably preserved village dating from 3,000BC. Close by is the stone circle of the **Ring of Brodgar**. Finally, we will visit the islands only distillery, **Highland Park**. This whisky has a distinctly heathery flavour captured from the island's peat. Samples are taken from the oak casks, seasoned with Olorosso sherry. We will then catch the late afternoon ferry back to the mainland and travel for an hour or so to your overnight accommodation.



Highland Park Stills

Day Five: Skye

Travelling through some of Scotland's best scenery this morning we will head towards the Isle of Skye. Heading towards the new bridge to the Island we will pass the castle of **Eileen Donan**. This is probably the most photographed castle in Britain and has a stunning and romantic setting. The scenery of Skye is dominated by the dramatic **Cuillin Hills** - Britain's finest mountain range. Once we are on the island there are many sightseeing options. These could include **Dunvegan Castle**, seat of the chiefs of the Clan Macleod. Skye is also known as a haven for artists due to the exceptional light found here and there are many remote galleries to explore as well as award winning seafood restaurants in Portree, the Island's capital. Trips can also be taken to feed the Sea Eagles in the Sound of Ramsay. We end the day with a visit to Skye's only distillery, home of the volcanically powerful **Talisker** malt. With its distinctively peppery character it is said to "explode on the palate". The distillery uses traditional cooling coils or "worm tubs" which makes a fuller flavour than a modern condenser. Overnight Skye.



Talisker on Skye

Day Six: Skye to Fort William to Mull

We begin by catching the ferry from Skye to Mallaig – the legendary Syke boat. After about an hour, we will be back on the mainland. Travelling east, we will drive through spectacular scenery, from vast mountains to sandy beaches. On the road to Fort William there is the **Glenfinnan Monument**. This celebrates those who rose in support of Bonnie Prince Charlie in 1745. On arriving at Fort William, we visit the **Ben Nevis** distillery, so called because it is overlooked by the tallest mountain in Britain. We stop to taste the fragrant, waxy fruitiness of the malts before passing the **Commando Memorial** to your overnight hotel.



Commando Memorial

Day Seven: Mull

Today, we catch the ferry to **Mull**. This is a wild and beautiful island with over 300 miles of dramatic scenic coastline and stunning beaches which rise to the peak of Mull's highest mountain Ben More at 3,000 feet. Visitors now have the option of visiting one of the magnificent castles of **Torosay** or **Duart**. Another alternative could be to visit the Abbey on the tiny Island of Iona. Historically important in the development of Christianity in the Britain, the Abbey is a venerated site and the burial place of the early Scottish kings. From this vantage point, it is possible to see some of the wildlife of the area, including whales, dolphins, seals and basking sharks. Our final stop will be at the **Tobermory** distillery to sample their Iona whisky, named after the small Island where St Columba began his mission in Scotland in 563. Overnight on Mull.



Tobermory whisky barrels

Day Eight: Mull to Oban to Islay

From Mull, we catch a ferry to Oban, the gateway to the Islands. The town is the home of the **Oban** distillery, placed on the main street, facing the sea. We travel along the scenic west coast road to catch the ferry to **Islay**. On arriving at Port Askaig, we will stop at the distillery of **Caol Ila**, nestling in a cove near the port. The pear-shaped stills and wash stills like flat onions are housed in a building dating back to 1879. Time permitting, we will visit **Bunnahabhain**, the most hidden of the Islay distilleries, which is so close to the sea that a kerb has been built to stop cars from rolling into the sea. Here we sample the sweet whisky said to taste of Dundee cake, toasted nuts and sea breezes. From here, we travel to your hotel in Port Charlotte. You may wish to spend the evening fishing for wild trout on the beautiful Loch Gorm.



Caol Ila

Day Nine: Islay

We start the morning by driving to the southern tip of the island to **Ardbeg**, a distillery originally run by smugglers and famous for its peaty flavours. The Old Kiln restaurant here is a venue used by French writer-cook Martine Nouet who writes in Whisky Magazine. He highlights the aromas and flavours of whisky by relating them to the tastes in a meal, using foods found in Scotland. **Lagavulin** means "the hollow where the mill is" and this distillery is commanded by the ruins of Dunyveg Castle, once the stronghold of the Lords of the Isles. Neighbouring distillery **Laphroaig** has the most medicinal of malts. "Love it or hate it" says their advertising slogan. Its founder died by falling into one of the vats in 1847. Now you can claim part of the peaty site at Laphroaig, and plant a flag to mark your ownership. Finally, you may wish to visit, **Port Ellen Maltings**, who supply most of the Islay distilleries. Overnight Port Charlotte.



Ardbeg distillery

Day Ten: Islay to Campbeltown

This morning we visit **Bruichladdich**, Scotland's most westerly distillery, which still uses much of the original equipment dating from 1881 - the great iron mash tun and the Oregon pine wash backs. From here we travel to **Bowmore**, the capital of Islay, but barely more than a hamlet. We visit the famous Bowmore Vaults, where the whisky spends decades below sea level in damp cellars. Finally today, we will take the ferry to Kennacraig and head down the narrow peninsula of Kintyre, to Campbeltown, perched by the headland known as the Mull of Kintyre, made famous by Paul McCartney. Overnight in Campbeltown.



Bowmore

Day Eleven: Campbeltown to Arran to Glasgow / Edinburgh

Starting the day with a short trip to the **Springbank** distillery we will discover the flavours of the Longrow and Hazelburn malts. Then, catching the ferry to the Island of Arran. Known as 'Scotland in miniature', Arran is a condensed version of the best that Scotland has to offer, with pretty coastal villages, rugged mountains and woodland. We stop at the relatively new **Arran** distillery, opened in 1995 and Scotland's newest distillery. Here we have lunch in the distillery's fine restaurant. Time permitting; we can see some of the islands sights such as **Machine Moor Stone Circles** or **Brodick Castle and Garden**. Finally, we will catch the later afternoon ferry to Ardrossan and then to Glasgow or Edinburgh.



Brodick Castle

(11 Days, all hotels with breakfast, **Blue Badge Driver /Guide**, based on the number in your group)

Price per person – please contact us – Toll Free: 1866 464 7389

Accommodation and Tour Details

Accommodation and Meals

Accommodation is based on first class accommodation. Lunch and evening meals are not included unless specifically stated in the tour notes. We are able to offer several grades of accommodations from beautiful bed and breakfasts to whisky orientated hotels and castles.

Guides and Entrance Fees

Each tour is lead by a fully qualified [Scottish Blue Badge Driver / Guide](#). In most instances, entrances to historic attractions are included in the price we will quote you. Distillery tours will vary according to the level of tour you require and between distilleries.

Prices

We aim to offer the best and most competitive price for each of our tours. We use our partners to get the best price at the time of booking. The cost will also depend on the services you require. Please [contact us](#) for the best price.

Airport Transfers

We can provide transfers from any location and airports or cruise ports. Return transfers from London airports to the start and finish of the tour are not in the tour costs.

Practical Information

Climate

As some of attractions on this tour are out of doors it is advisable to take the correct clothing. With the unpredictability of the climate and forecast, wet weather clothing is essential. Sturdy footwear and waterproof clothing are advised.

Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June
6	7	10	13	17	20
July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
22	21	19	14	10	7

Health

This tour involves a walking on some terrain that can be fairly rough. We ask all our travellers to carefully consider the physical demands of our tours and discuss any concerns that may arise. There is much scope for flexibility within each tour to accommodate a range of limitations and needs, but we do have to be clear what they may be before accepting any booking.

Additionally, if you find walking difficult or any other health requirement, please let us know as soon as possible. There may be motorised wheelchairs available at some attractions. These may be booked if sufficient notice is given.

Taxes

Value Added Tax is applied to most goods. Most travellers can get a VAT refund, but you must ask and the paperwork and procedures can be long and complicated.

Tipping

Some restaurants and hotels will automatically add a 10-15% service charge. Check your bill before tipping further. Taxis, Restaurants, Bell Boys, Porter expect a tip, bar staff in pubs, do not.

Important information

The information in this tour profile is given in good faith and covers the planned excursions, attractions and conditions which should be available on this tour. In some instances, due to unforeseen circumstances, changes in the above itinerary might be necessary. To appreciate this tour to its best, you should be prepared to be flexible where necessary.

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