

# JOURNEY to the NORTHERN ISLES OF SCOTLAND



SHETLAND COASTLINE

SEPTEMBER 5 - 14, 2024

## *An Exploration of Orkney & Shetland*

Jutting from the northern tip of Scotland into the North Sea, Orkney and the Shetland Islands have a unique history set within a dramatic coastal landscape. Scattered island communities are characteristically Nordic with a strong Viking heritage developed over centuries of Scandinavian rule. The extraordinarily rich wildlife of the islands draws naturalists from around the world. Whether your interest is natural history or ancient worlds, this island sojourn is an adventure off the beaten track.

We begin with a gentle exploration of Edinburgh, Scotland's cultural and political capital. From Edinburgh, we fly to Orkney, making our base in the busy port town of Kirkwall. We spend time exploring this ancient community and touring the island's famed prehistoric sites. See Stromness and Scapa Bay, overlooking Scapa Flow, a major naval center in both World Wars. A morning at Skara Brae, one of Europe's oldest villages, highlights the long history of the island.

Flying from Orkney to Sumburgh, we continue further north to the Shetland Islands. Our adventures take us as close to the Arctic Circle as many of us will ever get! A day-long boat trip around one of the smaller islands, teeming with bird and sea life, will be a highlight. We'll gain insight into the importance of the woolen industry at the Sandness Mill, and we'll explore the charming capital of Lerwick.

Be part of the adventure with Discover Europe this year to the *ORKNEY & SHETLAND ISLANDS*.



A GATHERING OF PUFFINS

THE COST OF THIS ITINERARY, PER PERSON, DOUBLE OCCUPANCY IS:

LAND ONLY:	\$ 5660
SINGLE SUPPLEMENT:	\$ 1190

*Airfares are available from many U.S. cities. Please call for details.*

THE FOLLOWING SERVICES ARE INCLUDED:

<b>HOTELS:</b>	8 nights' accommodation at a first class hotel, including all hotel taxes and service charges
<b>AIRFARE:</b>	Flights from Edinburgh to Kirkwall, Kirkwall to Sumburgh, Sumburgh to Edinburgh
<b>BAGGAGE:</b>	Porterage of one large suitcase per person
<b>COACHING:</b>	All ground transportation as detailed in the itinerary
<b>MEALS:</b>	Full Scottish breakfast daily, 7 dinners
<b>GUIDES:</b>	Discover Europe tour director throughout
<b>ENTRANCES:</b>	Entrance fees to all sites as detailed in the itinerary

*Please note that travel insurance is not included on this tour. Insurance information will be mailed to each registration on receipt of deposit.*

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**THU., SEPTEMBER 5<sup>TH</sup>** - Departure from your chosen international gateway city. **OVERNIGHT: PLANE**

**FRI., SEPTEMBER 6<sup>TH</sup>** - Upon arrival at Edinburgh Airport, you will be met for the transfer to our centrally located hotel. You'll have time to rest before we partake in a brief walking tour of this beautiful city before a welcome dinner at the hotel. **(D) OVERNIGHT: EDINBURGH**

**SAT., SEPTEMBER 7<sup>TH</sup>** - This morning we board our flight to Kirkwall, capital of the Orkney Islands. After hotel check-in, we'll spend the afternoon exploring the town with visits to St. Magnus' Cathedral, the Bishop's Palace and the Highland Park distillery (subject to opening times). Dinner is included this evening. **(B, D) OVERNIGHT: KIRKWALL**

**SUN., SEPTEMBER 8<sup>TH</sup>** - Today we travel 5,000 years back in time visiting the World Heritage sites of Orkney's Neolithic Heartland. These include Maeshowe, a Neolithic chambered tomb considered to be one of the finest architectural achievements of prehistoric Europe, the Ring of Brodgar, a magnificent circle of upright stones with an outer ditch built more than 4,500 years ago, the ceremonial Standing Stones of Stenness, part of what was originally a ring of twelve tall stones erected in the form of an ellipse, dating back to 3,000 BC, and Skara Brae, truly awe-inspiring and the best-preserved prehistoric village in northern Europe. Dinner at our hotel in Kirkwall this evening. **(B, D) OVERNIGHT: KIRKWALL**

**MON., SEPTEMBER 9<sup>TH</sup>** - Today we discover the delights of Orkney's scenic South Isles and East Mainland. We drive along historic Scapa Flow, a safe harbour used by the Vikings during their occupation of Orkney, and also by the Royal Navy during both world wars. Then we cross the first of the Churchill Barriers, a series of causeways linking five Orkney Islands together, to the tiny island of Lambholm where we find the marvelous Italian Chapel built by prisoners of war during World War II. Continuing to the island of South Ronaldsay, we'll be treated to an interactive learning experience at the Tomb of the Eagles before taking a walk to the 5,000 year-old cliff-side tomb. A free evening in Kirkwall this evening. **(B) OVERNIGHT: KIRKWALL**

**TUE., SEPTEMBER 10<sup>TH</sup>** - This morning we return to Kirkwall Airport for the short flight to Sumburgh on the Shetlands. We'll stop to admire puffins nesting on the dramatic cliffs at Sumburgh before we drive north to Lerwick for a walking tour of this charming port town and the chance to visit the fantastic new Shetland museum and to explore independently. Onward to a welcome dinner at our hotel. **(B, D) OVERNIGHT: SHETLAND**

**WED., SEPTEMBER 11<sup>TH</sup>** - Today we discover Northmavine, described as "the largest, wildest and most beautiful parish in Shetland". We travel through the picturesque Village of Voe and across Shetland's narrowest point, Mavis Grind which separates the North Sea from the Atlantic Ocean. Marvel at the superb views across Ronas Voe, a narrow fjord cutting deep into the north mainland, to the red granite cliffs and Shetland's highest summit at Ronas Hill. We'll stop at Da Drongs, dramatic stacks in Sandwick Bay, en route to the fascinating Tangwick Haa Museum which illustrates the way of life in Northmavine through the ages. We'll return to our hotel in Lerwick for dinner. **(B, D) OVERNIGHT: SHETLAND**

**THU., SEPTEMBER 12<sup>TH</sup>** - We'll take a spectacular morning wildlife cruise around the Islands of Bressay and Noss today with an expert guide. We'll spot razorbills, guillemots, puffins, gannets and much more at the Noss National Nature Reserve; explore cliffs and caves, and watch for seals, whales, dolphins and otters. We'll view fascinating aquatic life, including starfish, crabs, sea urchins, soft corals and jellyfish, with an underwater camera tethered to a mini submarine. We return to our hotel for dinner. **(B, D) OVERNIGHT: SHETLAND**



**FRI., SEPTEMBER 13<sup>TH</sup>** - This morning we have a tour of Shetland's scenic South Mainland, including a walk across the sand tombolo to the famous St. Ninian's Isle for a visit to the medieval chapel where the ancient treasure was found. We'll continue to the fascinating Croft House Museum to learn about 19<sup>th</sup>- century life on the island, and stop at Jarlshof, described as "one of the most remarkable archaeological sites ever excavated in the British Isles," before continuing on to Sumburgh Airport. We return to Edinburgh on the afternoon flight and enjoy a farewell dinner at one of Edinburgh's superb restaurants. **(B, D) OVERNIGHT: EDINBURGH**

**SAT., SEPTEMBER 14<sup>TH</sup>** - The reluctant farewell to Scotland with morning transfers to Edinburgh Airport for returning flights to the U.S. Alternatively, stay on in Edinburgh for a few days to enjoy its world-class museums. **(B) OVERNIGHT: HOME**

