

WILD FIBERS AND WILDLIFE

Faroe Islands
Inner Hebrides
Orkney Islands
Shetland Islands

June 3-15, 2024

June 15-27, 2024



WILD FIBERS
A GLOBAL EXPERIENCE



This unique expedition appeals to those interested in fascinating history, natural fibers, wonderful wildlife and the most endearing people. We will travel through the Outer Hebrides, the Orkneys, and the spectacular (though often soggy) Faroe Islands.

We will explore both inhabited and uninhabited villages, learning about ancient cultures unique to island life, along with being hosted by some of the stalwarts of the fiber industry. We will also have the opportunity hike along the clifftops (for those so inclined), or enjoy Zodiac cruising below them.

Few ships are large enough to navigate the open water to the North Sea, yet small enough to weave among the smaller islands along the Scottish coast. The MS Island Sky with just 95 fellow passengers is the ideal choice, combining both elegance and expedience. To duplicate this trip by road, air, and sea would be a logistical nightmare, requiring nearly twice the



time. To visit the small communities of Westray, Unst and Fetlar with the uninhabited St Kilda into one itinerary is rare and when combined with the towns of Torshavn and Lerwick, such an adventure rarely comes along.

This trip provides a special understanding not only of the island histories, but the ability to engage with locals who have dedicated their lives and livelihoods to natural fibers in these remote locations.

Itinerary (June 15 schedule operates in the opposite direction beginning in Oban and ending in Aberdeen.)

Day 1 Aberdeen, Scotland.

Embark the MS Island Sky this afternoon. Transfers will be provided from Aberdeen Airport and rail station at a fixed time. Sail this evening to the Orkney Islands.

Day 2 North Ronaldsay, Orkney Islands

This morning we arrive at the northernmost of the Orkney Islands, the remote and isolated North Ronaldsay. Renowned for its beautiful coastal scenery and abundant birdlife, it is one of the crown jewels in the history of Northern European short-tailed sheep. In 1832, a stone wall was erected along the island's perimeter to keep the sheep off the pasture land, preserving it for cattle who were deemed more valuable. The North Ronaldsay sheep were forced to survive on seaweed and to this day are one of the few mammals who can. Guests have the option to either spend time with some of the local farmers or accompany one of the ship's naturalists on a nature walk searching for some of the many bird species that are both resident and vagrant visitors.

Day 3 Fair Isle, Shetland Islands.

This morning we anchor off the remote island of Fair Isle. Located midway between the Shetland and Orkney Islands, the tiny population of sixty or so islanders always extend a warm welcome. Famous for its birds, knitwear, and historic shipwrecks, our group will enjoy a special meet and greet with the local shepherds and accomplished knitters. Afterwards, there is time for a walk across the island, searching out the puffin slopes, a visit to the community hall for a cup of tea or indulge in something special from the gift shop. If the weather permits, we will sail around to Noss Head in the afternoon where the



cliffs will be full of nesting gannets, guillemots and fulmars.

Day 4 Lerwick.

Our day in the Shetland capital is a wild and woolly extravaganza for fiber enthusiasts, meeting with the renowned Jamieson & Smith Woolbrokers, responsible for purchasing wool from 700 farmers and crofters throughout the Shetlands, a visit to a 1200 acre farm raising both Shetland sheep and cattle, and concluding with a stop at the Shetland Textile Museum. For the non-fiber enthusiasts, there is a trip to the remarkable archaeological site of Jarlshof, that was uncovered by a violent storm in the winter of 1896/7, revealing an extraordinary settlement, embracing at least 5000 years of human history. The site contains a remarkable sequence of stone structures—an Iron-Age broch (roundhouse), several Norse longhouse, a Medieval farmstead and the 16th century laird's house. Tonight we will be entertained by local musicians.

Day 5 Fetlar & Unst.

We continue our exploration of the Shetlands with our visits to the northern islands of Fetlar and Unst. Fetlar has been inhabited for over 5000 years and the island lays claim to being the first Norse landing site in the Shetlands. Known as the most fertile of the Shetland Islands, the wildflowers bring color to the landscape whilst the birdlife on the island is prolific. Over lunch we sail to Unst, Britain's most northerly inhabited island. Our group will visit The Heritage Centre which hosts the most extensive collection of Shetland lace knitting, and encompasses how the islanders have lived over the centuries. We will also visit the Unst Boat Haven, dedicated to the history of the island's distinctive wooden boats which descend from Viking craft.

Day 6 Torshavn, Faroe Islands.

After a morning at sea we make our first call in the Faroes on Torshavn. The Faroese economy is still largely based on sheep and boats with wool as its currency. A Faroese proverb even states "Ull er



Day 7 Vestmanna.

Vestmanna is our base for today as we explore the northwest corner of Streymoy and the nearby cliffs. Here we will board local boats to explore these vertical cliffs that climb almost 1500 feet, sailing into grottos carved by the surf over the years and watching the thousands of seabirds including puffins, guillemots, fulmars and kittiwakes that nest here each summer. After lunch on board, we will drive to the beautiful village of Saksun, an isolated settlement situated beneath steep majestic mountains. We visit Duvugaroar, an old farmhouse which is now a museum and a traditional Faroese wooden church in Kollafjord.



place north of Tvoroyri on the east coast of Suduroy with fantastic views towards the three islands Litla Dímun, Stora Dímun and Skuvoy. During lunch we begin sailing back to Scotland.

Day 8 Suduroy.

Suduroy, the southernmost island of the group is our base for the morning. From the port of Tvoroyri we have a choice of activities. Choose to join an island drive filled with stunning scenery as we pass through villages, fjords, tunnels and on to the southernmost point, the Akraberg lighthouse. In Porkeri we will take the ridge-top road which winds up the mountainside for wonderful views towards the steep cliffs on the west coast. Both locals and visitors agree this excursion delivers the essence of the Faroe Islands with mountains and fjords, villages and valleys, birds, sheep and nature. Alternatively, those feeling active may wish to join a hike to Hvaanhagi, a beautiful, uninhabited

Day 9 Isle of Lewis & Shiant Islands.

Today we arrive on the Isle of Lewis, home of the world renowned Harris Tweed, where our group will take a short drive across the island and go behind the scenes at the mill to see how traditional tweed is still made. In the afternoon, we head to the beautiful west



coast. Described as Scotland's Stonehenge, the Callanish Standing Stones date from around 3000 BC. There are a total of 32 stones in a circular and avenue design. The stones stand like a petrified forest on the flat top of a peninsula which reaches out into East Loch Roag. Our final stop is the Gearrannan Blackhouse Village, a reconstructed settlement of traditional black houses which were made using dry stone masonry and have thatched roofs, distinctively weighted down with rocks. We will board the Zodiacs for a cruise around the spectacular basalt cliffs of the Shiant Islands, a group of little islands located a few miles off the shores of Lewis. This is an excellent place to spot puffins, razorbills, guillemots, seals and hopefully white-tailed eagles.

Day 10 St Kilda, Outer Hebrides.

Today we set foot into one of the most extraordinary chapters in sheep history, the Soay. For centuries, the people on St. Kilda survived gathering bird eggs from the cliffs and raising sheep. In 1930, this isolated population of just 36 Gaelic speaking inhabitants was evacuated by the government at their own request, leaving the ancient breed of short-tailed sheep to survive. To this day, the feral flock is monitored by scientists, studying their uniquely pure genetics. We also cruise past two of the largest gantries in the world at Stac Lee and Stac an Armin. These impressive stacs rise 170 meters from the sea and are home to up to 60,000 breeding pairs of northern gannet.

Day 11 Loch Scavaig & Canna, Inner Hebrides.

Arrive this morning to lovely Loch Scavaig on the island of Skye. Just beyond is the freshwater Loch Corruisk with its breathtakingly beautiful view over the Cuillins. This is



great walking country, but for those who prefer a less energetic morning our Zodiacs will explore the coast looking out for seals. Over lunch we will sail to Canna, strategically placed between the mountains of Rum and the Outer Hebrides, the island of Canna and its adjoining neighbour Sanday

are bound together like some rare text that reveals over 60 million years of Hebridean geology and history. They have an amazingly rich archaeological landscape with remains dating to all periods of settled occupation in Scotland. Canna is run as a single farm and bird sanctuary by the National Trust for Scotland. The fertile soil and its diversity of habitats mean that the island has an incredibly rich plant life with 248 native flowering plants recorded. We will see Canna House, and wander across grassy basalt plateaus to the 600-foot cliffs on the north shore.

Day 12 Staffa, Iona & Lunga.

We awake this morning at Staffa, the south side where the perpendicular rock face features an imposing series of black basalt columns, known as the Colonnade, which has been cut by the sea into cathedralesque caverns, most notably Fingal's Cave. Weather permitting, we will use our Zodiacs to explore closer. We continue to Iona which has been occupied for thousands of years and has been a place of pilgrimage and Christian worship for several centuries. It was to this flat, Hebridean island that St Columba fled from Ireland in 563 and established a monastery. Here his followers were responsible for the conversion of much of pagan Scotland and Northern England. No less than 62 Scottish Kings are buried in the Abbey. We end the day in the Treshnish Isles, an archipelago of uninhabited volcanic islets. The island of Lunga has been described as 'a green jewel in a peacock sea' and is a summer nesting-place for hundreds of seabirds.

Day 13 Oban. Disembark this morning after breakfast. Transfers will be provided to Glasgow International Airport and Central Station at a fixed time.





The charming MS Serenissima began her career as the Harald Jarl, cruising the Norwegian coastline and fjords. Since 2003, when she was extensively renovated, she has been operating as a classic cruise ship. Previously known as the MS Andrea, she was upgraded again in 2013 and started her new life as the MS Serenissima. With her small size she can navigate into small, remote ports inaccessible to the big cruise ships and appears an impressive sight when moored. With her fleet of Zodiacs, she is capable of both destination and expedition cruising.

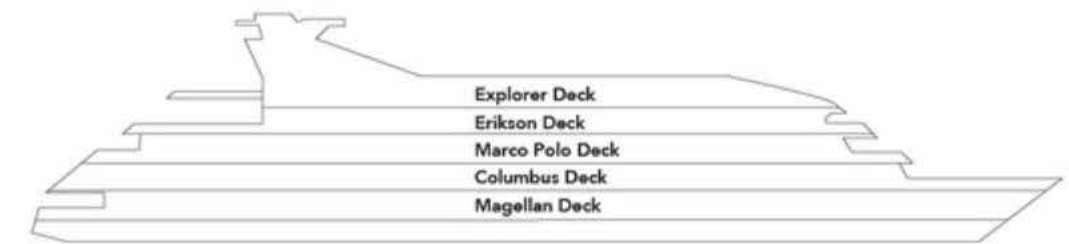
Your Space

The facilities on board include two lounges – the larger Andrea Lounge is comfortable and spacious and the smaller Harald Jarl Lounge is more intimate. There is also a small library and Wi-Fi is available at an extra cost throughout the vessel. The outside areas really are something special. A spacious observation deck allows 360 degree views of the passing scenery. From here, step down to the lido area with Jacuzzi and outside bar. The covered seating area at the back of Deck 6 is ideal for relaxing with a drink in hand. Perhaps, one of the best known and loved features of this vessel is its unique style. During the major refit in Sweden the then owners commissioned Swedish interior designers to create a country house style which has recently been updated with some Art Deco styling which works particularly well on a vessel of this vintage, providing intimacy and a classic nautical sensibility often lacking in larger vessels.

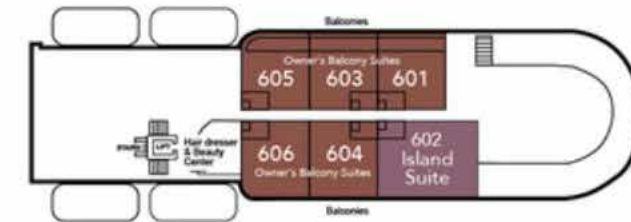
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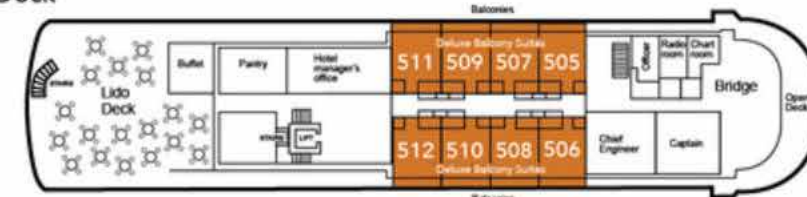
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Magellan Deck Standard Suites	£6995	£6695
Columbus Deck Superior Suites	£7195	£6895
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Marco Polo Deck Corner Suites	£7995	£7695
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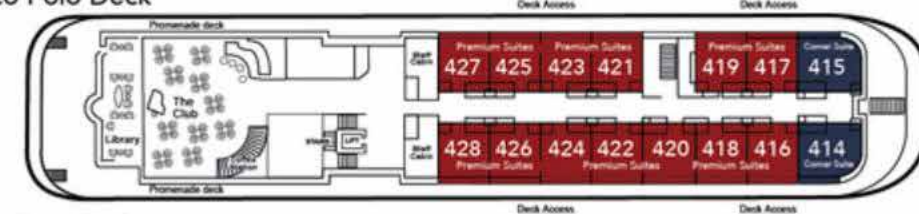
Explorer Deck



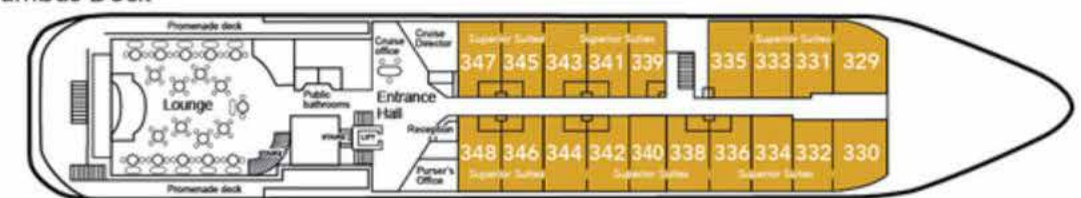
Erikson Deck



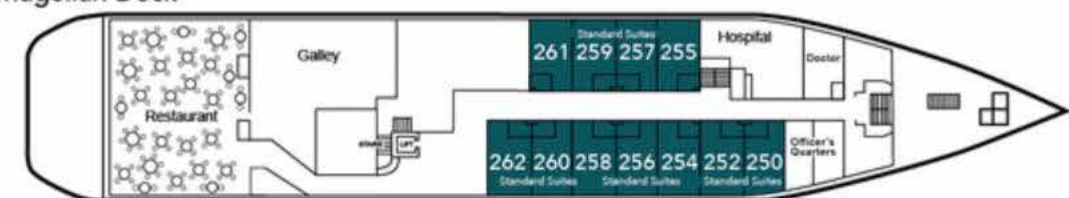
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Magellan Deck



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- Superior Suites
- Deluxe Balcony Suites
- Island Suite
- Premium Suites with Deck Access