

# **Scotland Expedition**

## **Outer Hebrides**

**17 April - 24 April 2020**

*“Its better to see something once than to hear about it a thousand times”*

### **Expedition Outline**

Oh, the magical Outer Hebrides! Arriving on these incredible islands, you really will feel like you have escaped from it all. Discover a different pace of life as you explore untouched coasts and countryside, fascinating history and unique island cultures.

The Outer Hebrides, also known as The Western Isles, are an island chain located off the north west coast of Scotland. They are made up of many small islands, of which only 15 are inhabited.

The Western Isles span over 130 miles, stretching from Vatersay in the south to Lewis in the north. Each island is connected by a causeway, bridge or ferry making the journey through the islands a truly unique experience. The Scottish Gaelic language is still dominant in many communities in the Outer Hebrides.

We will meet at Oban before 12pm on the 17th of April and take the ferry to Castlebay, which is situated on Barra Island. The plan is to travel from Oban to Castlebay at 13.30pm. The ferry arrives at 6pm and we will spend the night in a hotel or hostel.

We will meet for a briefing on the 18th of April over breakfast and plan where to explore first, based on the weather conditions and upcoming forecast.

We will have time in the morning to pack our kayaks and prepare for 6 days and 5 nights of wild camping.

Options are plentiful for exploring the Hebrides by sea kayak. If the weather allows, we will look at exploring the islands south of Castle bay, Berneray and Mingulay. This area is absolutely stunning, and if the sun shines, it is one of the best sea kayaking locations in the world.

This chain of islands forms an area of unspoilt natural beauty with spectacular scenery, impressive mountain ranges, moorland, lochs, machair and miles of golden 'sometimes sheltered' sandy beaches, turquoise seas and diverse wildlife.

The Outer Hebrides can offer challenging sea conditions, have big swell on the west coast and surf beaches to land and launch from. We will try our best to offer a wonderful all-round sea kayaking expedition experience.

On our return to Castlebay on the 23rd of April we will stay in a hotel/hostel where we will have opportunity to freshen up and enjoy a meal and a few beverages together, before we depart on the ferry for Oban on the 24th of April at 07:55am.

### **Experience Needed**

To get the most out of the expedition you should be an Intermediate paddler and be comfortable in conditions associated with force 4 winds.

If you have any questions regarding the required ability please feel free to contact us.

## **What is Included**

Kayak. We can supply suitable expedition kayaks or you are welcome to bring your own kayak. *Please advise if you require a kayak at least two weeks prior to the commencement of the expedition.*

Buoyancy aids /PFD.

Spray decks.

Paddles.

Sea Kayaking Cornwall's experienced guide with area knowledge offering advice, assistance, planning and safety throughout the trip.

2 Nights hotel or hostel accommodation in Castlebay.

## **Not Included**

Transport to the start location in the Outer Hebrides – Scotland.

Food and beverages during the trip.

Camping equipment.

## **Cost**

£810.

## **Location and Times**

We meet in Oban on Saturday the 17<sup>th</sup> of April before 12pm (meeting location to be determined nearer the time).

Please ensure you buy all of your supplies of food, drink and gas or fuel for the week before we meet! There are food stores and sports shops in Castlebay. Experience has taught us that it is advisable to purchase gas canisters or fuel suitable for your cooker prior to arrival. If you are flying then please let us know and we will endeavour to have fuel available for you.

We will return to Oban on the ferry at 07.55am on the 24<sup>th</sup> of April at 12.30pm where we bid farewell.

## **What to Bring - Recommended**

- Travel insurance.
- Food. Prepare for 5 breakfasts - 6 lunches – 5 dinners - plus snacks, hot drinks and soups for the time we are out.
- Dry bags – various sizes.
- Camping kit: Tent, sleeping mat and sleeping bag suitable for cold conditions (3-4 season).
- Stove, pans and fuel/gas, plus a reliable means of lighting.
- water bottle or flexible water bag
- Thermos or “Jet boil” style cooker for keeping or heating liquids.
- Paddling kit – suitable for cold-water paddling. Please contact us if you are uncertain that you have the correct gear. Please note that we do not recommend paddling in a wet suit. However, if you choose to, then bring extra clothing, and ensure you have good coverage for your feet – Sealskin or similar gortex socks and thick paddling shoes.
- Safety kit. We carry adequate safety kit. However, we suggest you bring the safety kit that you would normally paddle with. A group can never have enough safety equipment on a trip!
- Sponge.
- Sun cream.
- Sunglasses and hat.
- Insect repellent, tick removers and midge spray.

- Camera.
- Headlamp/torch
- Personal medication and first aid kit.
- Reading material if the elements keep us off the water.
- Suitable bags to carry your kit in up the beach (IKEA bag).
- Clothing. At least two changes of warm clothes, warm hats, gloves and water-proofs.
- Suitable footwear and change of clothes for walking in the conditions and changing into at the end of the day.
- Phone and power banks. Scotland has cell phone reception in many but not all places. Ensure you have sufficient power banks.
- Money, as there are cafes and restaurants to visit. Not all will accept card payment.
- Fishing kit. There will be the opportunity to fish, so bring a hand line or fishing rod. Please note: This is not a guaranteed way of supplementing your food!

Looking forward to sharing our “DEVOTION TO THE OCEAN” with you!

Sea Kayaking Cornwall Team