

## UK – CRUISE THE SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS

7-day / 6-night Hotel Barge cruise & GUIDED sightseeing – includes return transfers from/to Inverness



**Departs:** Inverness every Sunday from 5<sup>th</sup> April to 25<sup>th</sup> October 2020

**Scottish Highlander**

**Spirit of Scotland**

**Fully inclusive costs:** \$6375 per person twin share

\$6805 per person twin share

**Value season departures from:** 5<sup>th</sup> April to 3<sup>rd</sup> May and from 4<sup>th</sup> October to 25<sup>th</sup> October 2020

**High season supplement from:** \$1085 per person twin share

\$1145 per person twin share

**High season departures from:** 10<sup>th</sup> May to 27<sup>th</sup> September 2020

**Single cabin supplement from:** \$2460

\$2540

For a journey steeped in beauty and myth, it's hard to surpass the Scottish Highlands. Cruising along the Caledonian Canal between Muirtown and Banavie on a luxury hotel barge is the perfect way to discover this dramatic landscape. See ancient castles, heather-clad hillsides, and some of the most spellbinding scenery; then there's the single malt whisky, and the myth of the famous inhabitant residing in Loch Ness.

With the choice of two barges and a range of activities there is no better way to see the dramatic Highlands. Our 8 passenger Scottish Highlander is spacious and has every comfort for a small group of passengers. On board you will find four cosy, very comfortable en-suite cabins each with a choice of twin or double beds.

The elegant 12 passenger Spirit of Scotland evokes the atmosphere of a traditional steamer that plied the lochs of Scotland in times gone by. Six air-conditioned cabins offer a choice of twin or double beds and are complemented by well-designed ensuite shower rooms. Outside, relax on a recliner or perhaps in the heated spa pool. The large upper sun deck is the ideal place to admire the breath-taking backdrop.

A champagne welcome and early evening walk sets the tone for the week ahead as we begin in Muirtown. Our journey takes us through Tomnahurich swing-bridge, before an afternoon of discovering one of Scotland's finest exports – whisky. We may visit Cawdor Castle immortalised in Shakespeare's Macbeth, before visiting Culloden Moor where the last battle on British soil occurred in 1746 and Urquhart Castle overlooking Loch Ness. Some days we drive through the hillsides to discover more of the Highlands including Eilean Donan – one of the most photographed castles in Scotland as it overlooks three sea lochs. There are excellent walking opportunities amongst the spectacular scenery, wildlife and folklore throughout the Highlands.

Discover canal cruising, and enjoy exploring different aspects of the Highlands on guided daily excursions. If you're feeling more active, take one of the free onboard bikes provided or walk to the next mooring point, the crew will be happy to help and point out their favourite trails and cycle paths.

**Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations**



**Suggested itinerary \* from Muirtown to Banavie:** \* *this is a sample itinerary and is subject to change. On alternate weeks the cruise will be in the reverse direction.* \*\* *Please note that the Cawdor Castle excursion is available between early May and the end of September only. An alternative excursion to impressive Fort George will replace it either side of these dates.* \*\*\* *Weather Permitting.*

#### **Day 1: Arrival day**

Guests are met in central Inverness, a gateway city serviced by daily flights and train services, and transferred by private chauffeured minibus to the hotel barge. Champagne Welcome and time for an evening stroll to the sea lock with wonderful views over the Moray and Beaulie Firths. A welcome dinner is served onboard.

#### **Day 2: Muirtown to Dochgarroch**

Our first cruise will take us up the Muirtown locks and through Tomnahurich swing-bridge, with an option to walk alongside the River Ness to the hamlet of Dochgarroch. After lunch onboard, we drive by mini-bus through stunning hilly scenery to take a closer look at one of Scotland's best known exports, whisky, at the Glen Ord distillery, founded in 1838 on the Black Isle by the Mackenzies of Ord. A fascinating description of the maturing and ageing process of single and blended malts is followed by a tasting. Dinner on board.

#### **Day 3: Dochgarroch to Fort Augustus**

This morning we enjoy Cawdor Castle \*\*, forever immortalised in Shakespeare's "Scottish Play", *Macbeth*, and its picturesque gardens. The castle contains a collection of tapestries, pictures and furnishings, and the Dowager Countess of Cawdor still lives there for part of the year. Then we visit Culloden Moor, scene of the last major battle on British soil in 1746. If there is time, we end our tour at the Clava Cairns, a pre-historic clan chieftain burial site dating back to 2000 B.C. Our cruise today is through Loch Dochfour and down Loch Ness with perhaps a chance of spotting "Nessie" before arriving at Fort Augustus. Dinner tonight is served on board.

#### **Day 4: Fort Augustus to Kytra**

After breakfast, we visit the private Highland Club, a spectacular exclusive set of residences and a former 19<sup>th</sup> Century Benedictine Monastery. Here we are treated to a falconry and birds of prey demonstration\*\*\* on the banks of Loch Ness, and the majesty of the swooping birds against the backdrop of the sweeping Scottish Highlands is not easily forgotten. There is time to explore the pretty village of Fort Augustus before lunch on board, after which our cruise takes us up the "flight of locks" and then on to our pretty mooring at Kytra. This evening we dine ashore at a local restaurant.

#### **Day 5: Kytra to Laggan**

The morning cruise today can be partially walked as we cross the very scenic Loch Oich, perhaps stopping en route for a spot of fishing, and onto the pretty Laggan Avenue. As we approach Laggan, our Highland Piper may greet us with a stirring rendition of traditional Scottish music. This afternoon, we take in some of the finest scenery Scotland has to offer as we drive to one of its best known and most photographed castles, Eilean Donan, which has featured in movies such as *Highlander* and James Bond's *The World Is Not Enough* and overlooks three sea lochs. Dinner is served on board.

#### **Day 6: Laggan to Banavie**

Our final cruise today will see us cross Loch Lochy, passing Gairloch, where there is the option to visit the nearby Spean Bridge Woollen Mill, or perhaps the Clan Cameron Museum. We continue on to Moy Bridge, the last fully hand-operated bridge on the canal, to moor at Banavie beneath Ben Nevis and a stroll from Neptune's Staircase leading down to Loch Eil. After lunch on board, our tour today takes us to the mystical battlefield of Glencoe, famed for one of the darkest days in Scottish history. Alternatively, we can enjoy some breath-taking panoramic views on a cable car ride to the summit of Aonach Mor Mountain. If time permits, we can also visit the ruins of Old Inverloch Castle. Tonight the Captain's Farewell Dinner is served on board.

#### **Day 7: Departure day**

After breakfast, guests are transferred by private chauffeured minibus to their choice of location in Inverness.

## Spirit of Scotland



## Scottish Highlander



Cuisine aboard both barges is traditional Scottish fare – salmon, game and seafood, served alongside fine wines and a range of whiskies. Here are some suggested ingredients in a typical cruise week:

**Regional Specialities:** Munro of Marinated Salmon; Rack of Lamb on a Scotch Broth Risotto with Mint infused Olive Oil; Fillet of Aberdeen Angus Beef with a Sherry and Wild Mushroom Sauce; Hickory Smoked Venison with Candied Walnuts and Blue Cheese

**Single Malt Whiskies:** Laphroaig 10 Year Old; Lagavulin 16 Year Old; Dalwhinnie 15 Year Old; Bowmore 12 Year Old; Isle of Jura 10 Year Old; Talisker 10 Year Old; Highland Park 12 Year Old; Macallan 10 Year Old Fine Oak; Glen Ord 12 Year Old; Benromach Speyside 10 Year Old

**Cheese Board:** Isle of Kintyre Mature Cheddar; Scottish Brie; Whisky Chase; Dunsyre Blue; Connage Smoked; Lanark Blue; Caboc; Gruth Dhu; Black Crowdie; Strathdon Blue; Bonchester



Other hotel barge cruises available from **Outdoor Travel** in **Ireland** on the River Shannon, Windsor on the **River Thames** near London, **Burgundy**, the **Loire Valley**, the **Bordeaux** region, **Provence** or on the **Canal du Midi** in the south of France and **Venice** in Italy.

**Contact Outdoor Travel for more itinerary details and reservations**

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