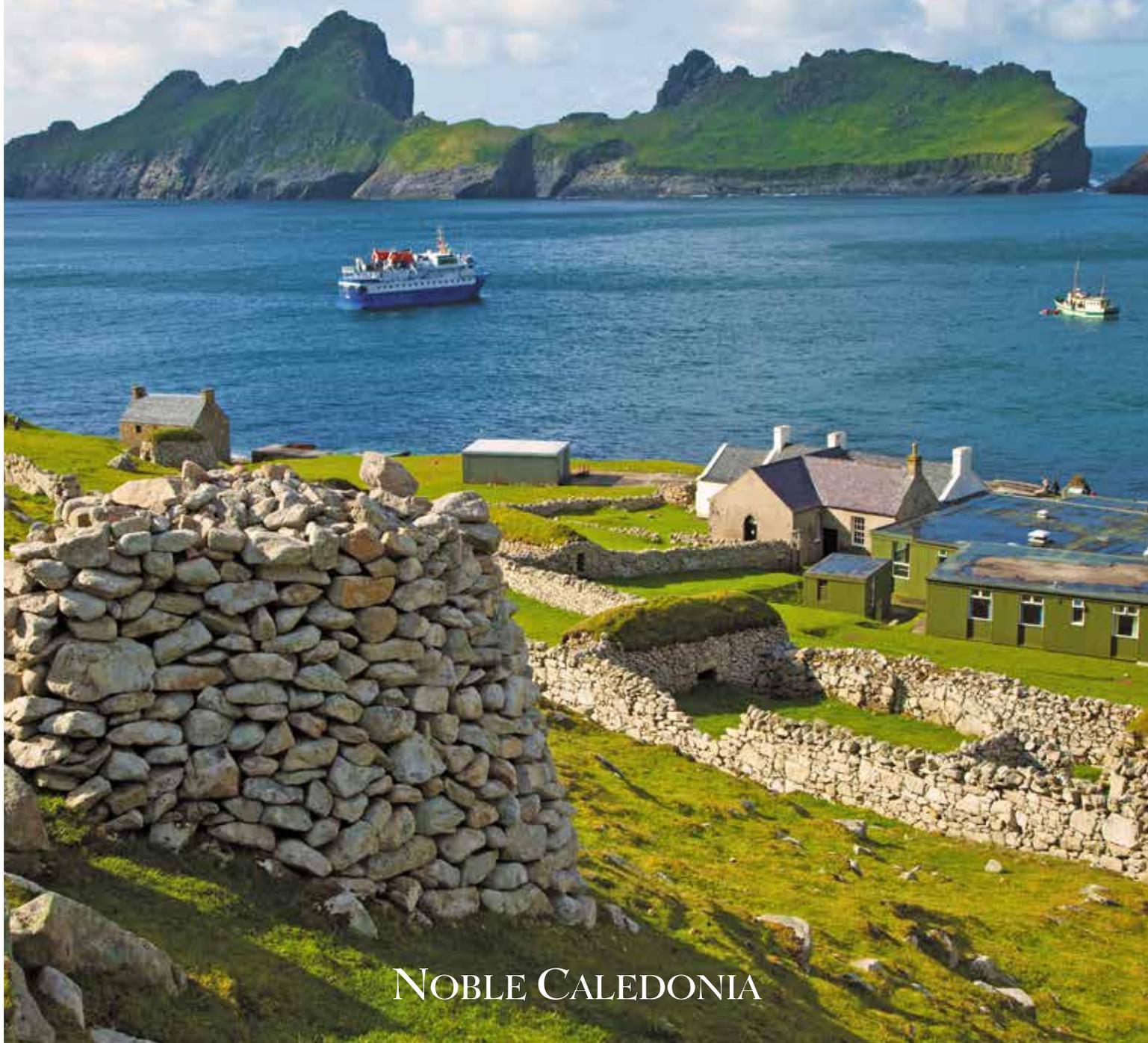


WILD SCOTTISH ISLANDS

An in-depth exploration of the remote islands of Scotland
aboard the Ocean Nova
18th to 27th May 2019



NOBLE CALEDONIA



Arctic Tern



Abandoned village on Hirta, St Kilda



Dramatic landscape of Hermaness National Nature Reserve, Unst

You can travel the world visiting all manner of exotic and wonderful places without realising that some of the finest scenery, fascinating history and most endearing people may be close to home. Nowhere is this truer than around Scotland's magnificent coastline, an indented landscape of enormous natural splendour with offshore islands forming stepping stones into the Atlantic.

This unique voyage will appeal to those who prefer their islands deserted, but with abundant bird and wildlife. If you have always had a hankering to visit some of the remotest and most inaccessible islands in Scotland, this is the ideal opportunity. Join us aboard the Ocean Nova as we sail from the port of Oban to the islands on the edge, visiting both inhabited and uninhabited islands and places of great natural beauty, rich in wildlife and mystical history, many with a long history dating back to the Iron Age.

Few cruise ships offer the chance to explore in-depth the islands off the northern coast of Scotland. This unique expedition includes the remote, uninhabited outposts of St Kilda and North Rona with the inhabited island of Foula and the northernmost point of the United Kingdom at Unst. Such a trip would be almost impossible to arrange independently and requires a small ship with the expeditionary qualities of the Ocean Nova. With just over eighty travelling companions, the atmosphere is more akin to a private yacht trip and ashore with our local experts and expedition members we will divide into small groups thereby enjoying a more comprehensive and peaceful experience.



The Itinerary

Day 1 Oban, Scotland. Embark the Ocean Nova this afternoon. Transfers will be provided from Glasgow Central Railway Station and Glasgow International Airport at a fixed time. Enjoy Welcome Drinks and Dinner as we sail this evening.

Day 2 Barra & Mingulay. This morning we will land on Barra which is near the southern tip of the Outer Hebrides and visit Castlebay which curves around the barren rocky hills of a beautiful wide bay. Here we find the 15th century Kisimul Castle, seat of the Clan Macneil and a key defensive stronghold situated on a rock in the bay. During lunch, we will sail the short distance to Mingulay, which is nearly 1600 acres and the largest of the group of islands south of Barra. Its towering cliffs and stacks face the Atlantic while the east side slopes gradually down to the sandy beach of Mingulay Bay. Despite there being a continuous population on the island for at least two thousand years, evacuation began in 1907 and the island was completely abandoned in 1912. Ruins of the village remain close to the shore which we will explore on a guided walk. The islands are also a nature reserve with important breeding populations of razorbills, guillemots, puffins, fulmars and shags.

Day 3 St Kilda. Arrive at first light in St Kilda, a remarkable uninhabited archipelago some fifty miles beyond the Outer Hebrides. Dominated by the highest cliffs and sea stacks in Britain, Hirta, St Kilda's main island was occupied on and off for at least two thousand years, with the last 36 Gaelic speaking inhabitants evacuated at their own request in 1930. Immediately after the evacuation, the island was bought by the Marquess of Bute to protect the island's thousands of seabirds including puffin and fulmars, and in 1957 it was bequeathed to The National Trust for Scotland. St Kilda is one of only two dozen UNESCO World Heritage Sites



Atlantic Grey Seal, North Rona



Iron Age Broch of Mousa, Shetland Islands



Archaeological site of Jarlshof, Shetland Islands



Exploring the island of Barra



Great Skua

with dual status reflecting its natural and cultural significance. The local ranger will join us on board before our expedition staff lead a number of guided walks on the island. Later, cruise past two of the largest gannetries in the world at Stac Lee and Boreray. These impressive stacs rise 170 metres from the sea and are home to up to 60,000 breeding pairs of northern gannet. Tonight we will sail past the Flannan Isles where we hope to see the famous lighthouse.

Day 4 North Rona & Sula Sgeir. Spend the day around North Rona, an isolated island some fifty miles north of Cape Wrath. The last islanders left North Rona in 1844 and today it is home to thirteen species of breeding seabirds including large colonies of great black-backed gulls, great skuas and puffins. There is also a large population of grey seals which we hope to observe on a Zodiac cruise. If weather permits we will also visit the gannet colony on Sula Sgeir home to over 5000 breeding pairs and renowned as the least visited national nature reserve in Britain.

Day 5 Foula & Papa Stour, Shetland Islands. This morning we visit Foula, one of Britain's most remote inhabited islands. Apart from a narrow coastal strip of more fertile croftland, Foula is an expanse of peat and moorland rising steeply to five dramatic peaks. In the long midsummer days, Foula's wildflowers provide a glorious burst of colour. The world's largest colony of Great Skuas compete fiercely with many Parasitic Jaegers for breeding territories. Over lunch we will sail the short distance to Papa Stour where we will use our Zodiacs to explore the stunning cliff scenery, sea stacks, arches, blowholes and coastal caves.

Day 6 Unst & Fetlar, Shetland Islands. We continue our exploration of Shetland in the northern islands of Unst and Fetlar. Unst is Britain's most northerly inhabited island and at the Heritage Centre we will learn about the islanders' struggles over the centuries and the industries that have prospered whilst the

Unst Boat Haven is dedicated to the history of the islands' distinctive wooden boats which descend from Viking craft. We also visit Saxa Vord with views over Hermaness National Nature Reserve and Muckle Flugga stacks and home to thousands of gannets and puffins as well as rare arctic-alpine plants. Over lunch we sail to Fetlar, inhabited for over 5,000 years 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 colour to the landscape whilst the birdlife on the island is prolific. Our expedition team will lead walks ashore including the Fetlar Interpretive Centre and Museum we will learn about the wildlife and archaeological history of the island.

Day 7 Lerwick. Spend the day in the Shetland capital of Lerwick. This morning enjoy a visit to the remarkable archaeological site of Jarlshof which was uncovered by a violent storm in the winter of 1896, revealing an extraordinary settlement site embracing at least 5,000 years of human history. The site contains a remarkable sequence of stone structures, late Neolithic houses, a Bronze-Age village, an Iron-Age broch and wheelhouses, several Norse longhouses, a Medieval farmstead, and the 16th-century laird's house. After lunch on board enjoy a free afternoon in the historic port of Lerwick. Wander through its narrow stone lanes and maybe visit the excellent Shetland Museum, containing historical artefacts from the Neolithic period and memorabilia from the Viking through to the whaling era. This evening we will be entertained by local musicians on board the ship as we moor overnight.

Day 8 Mousa & Fair Isle. At dawn we sail the short distance to the island of Mousa where we will see the forty-foot defensive tower built by the Picts more than 2000 years ago, and the tallest, best preserved example of an Iron Age broch (tower) in Britain. Spend the morning walking around this fascinating site before we

return to the ship and sail to Fair Isle arriving in the early afternoon. Here the tiny population of sixty or so islanders always extend us a warm welcome. Enjoy an afternoon to explore maybe walk across the island, visit the Bird Observatory or meet the local community and maybe purchase some of the famous knitwear. Return to the ship for dinner as we sail this evening.

Day 9 Papa Westray, Orkney Islands. Spend the morning on the Orkney Island of Papa Westray. Here you have time to stretch your legs on a number of island walks or maybe meet up with the local residents at the nearby community centre. You can choose to visit the 3500 year old Knap of Howar a Neolithic farm building that claims to be the oldest standing house in Europe and the 12th century St Boniface Kirk. In the north of the island is the North Hill reserve, an area of maritime heath and home to Arctic terns and skuas and also the extremely rare Scottish primrose. Return to the ship for lunch and enjoy an afternoon at sea as we sail back to mainland Scotland.

Day 10 Aberdeen. Disembark this morning. Transfers will be provided to Aberdeen airport and train station at a fixed time.

PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

Cat	Cabin Description	
1	Bunk bedded cabin for twin use	£3595
2	Standard Twin	£3995
3	Superior twin	£4295
1	Bunk bedded cabin for sole use	£4595
2	Standard twin sole use	£4995

PRICE INCLUDES: Nine nights aboard the Ocean Nova on a full board basis • House wine, beer and soft drinks with lunch and dinner on board • Shore excursions • Noble Caledonia expedition team • Gratuities • Transfers • Port taxes.
Not Included: Travel insurance.



Lounge



Category 3 cabin

OCEAN NOVA

We have chartered the expedition ship, the Ocean Nova for our unique island hopping expeditions. The vessel was built in Denmark in 1992 with high ice class to serve Greenland's west coast. In 2006 she was completely refurbished and now has a career as a small and comfortable expedition ship.

Your Cabin

The Ocean Nova accommodates just 84 passengers. Cabins are spread over two decks and include cabins for the single traveller, double and triple cabins, all with sea-view and private facilities. The double cabins have either two lower beds or upper and lower beds. The triple cabins have upper and lower beds. In your cabin you will also find a desk with chair and ample storage space for clothes and equipment. They are well designed with typical Scandinavian light woods.

Your Space

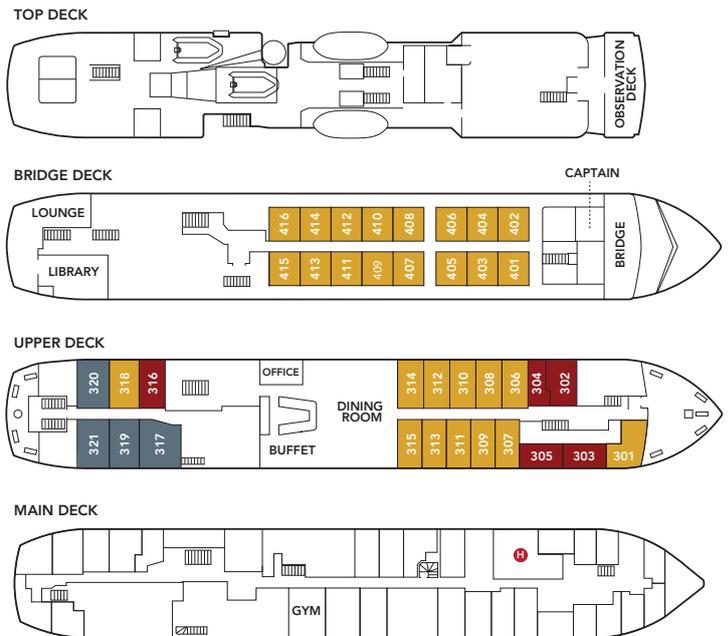
The Panorama lounge located on the Top deck affords excellent views and is the main meeting place where you can enjoy a drink with a breathtaking view of the surrounding landscape. It is here that our expedition team will entertain and educate you with lectures on biology, history, geology or ornithology with daily briefings. There is also a library with panoramic views and a good selection of books on the area you are visiting. On board there is a satellite phone, small gym and medical doctor. Passengers are welcome on the Bridge and there is always something to see or search for from the spacious observation decks.

Your Dining

The comfortable dining room seats all passengers in a single sitting and offers delicious hearty meals with a mixture of table service and buffet. It is comfortable and spacious enough to accommodate all passengers and expedition staff in one seating, and the portholes allow you to take in your surroundings as you dine. The informal dining arrangement adds to the friendly atmosphere on board and meals are a great chance to discuss all you have seen with your fellow travellers, and for the expedition team to share their knowledge.

Life On Board & Exploring Ashore

The atmosphere on board is informal and time on board is often spent out on deck keeping watch for wildlife or admiring the spectacular view. The schedule can change due to weather conditions or unexpected wildlife sightings which adds to the adventure. Daily briefings from our expedition team will prepare you for each day's activities and experts in subjects such as ornithology or marine biology will give talks and accompany us ashore.



■ CATEGORY 1 ■ CATEGORY 2 ■ CATEGORY 3



Explorations Ashore & Expedition Cruising

Please note that this is an expedition cruise and Zodiacs will be used regularly to make landings ashore. Due to the rugged nature of the islands and the lack of transportation, on many of the islands our exploration will be on foot and to make the most of this fascinating trip participants should be prepared for walks, often over uneven surfaces.

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All special offers are subject to availability. Our current booking conditions apply to all reservations and are available on request. Ports and itinerary subject to change.

Cover image: Ocean Noca at Hirta, St Kilda in the Outer Hebrides