

Squam Lakes Natural Science Center

Presents:

Hebridean Adventure

A Tour of Scotland's Outer Hebrides and Skye

May 15-28, 2020



Led by Iain MacLeod

Itinerary

Join native Scot Iain MacLeod for a very personal, small-group tour of Scotland's Outer Hebrides and Skye. Iain is an experienced group tour leader who has organized and led tours of Scotland more than a dozen times. The hotels are chosen by Iain for their comfort, ambiance, hospitality, and excellent food. Iain personally arranges every detail — flights, meals, transportation and daily destinations.

Thursday, May 15: Fly from Logan Airport, Boston.

Friday, May 16: Arrive Dublin then on to Glasgow. We will load up the van and head north and west towards Fort William. Along the way we will pass by Loch Lomond and drive through some of the spectacular West Highland scenery. We'll spend our first night at the Glengarry Castle Hotel overlooking Loch Oich (<http://www.glengarry.net/>).

Saturday, May 17: After a grand Scottish breakfast, we'll load up and head for Skye. We have a 2:00 pm ferry departure from Uig to Lochmaddy on North Uist. Black Guillemots will whistle their greeting from the rock walls in the harbor and Grey Seals will wave from rocky islands. We'll look for fishing Gannets, rafts of Manx Shearwaters. We'll see Kittiwakes, European Shags, Fulmars, and there's always a chance of Puffins and skuas. We arrive in Lochmaddy at 3:45 pm and have just a short drive to our next hotel. Our base for the next three nights is the Hamersay House (<http://www.hamersayhouse.co.uk/>).

Sunday, May 18: Today we'll explore North Uist. We'll take a drive around the island looking for breeding Red-throated Divers (loons) on road-side lochans and look for Golden Plovers, Hen Harriers, Merlins, Short-eared Owls, Golden Eagles, and Arctic Skuas on the moors. We'll visit the award-winning Taigh Chearsabhagh Museum & Arts Centre in Lochmaddy to learn a little about the island's cultural history. At the RSPB reserve at Balranald we can explore the flower-rich machair lands (farm fields) where hundreds of Northern Lapwings, Eurasian Oystercatchers, Common Redshanks, and Common Snipe make their home. We'll also listen for the rare and secretive Corncrake. We can take time to study the profusion of wild flowers and walk on the white sands of the storm beaches where Ringed Plovers and Arctic Terns nest. In the evening we'll explore the sea lochs and with luck we might see one of the many Otters that live in the labyrinth the salty tidal inlets or a family of short-eared owls as they hunt in the twilight.



Monday, May 19: We'll take a 2-hour boat tour out of beautiful Kallin Harbor around the island of Ronay and the bays and cliffs below Eaval (North Uist's highest mountain). One of the highlights will be sightings of nesting White-tailed Eagles. Later we'll explore the southern islands of the Uists. We'll look for Golden Eagles, Ravens and European Kestrels in the hills and visit Loch Druidibeg where lingering Whooper Swans are often found. Hen Harriers are here as well as divers, ducks, and nesting Greylag Geese. A visit to the Kildonan Museum will provide an overview of local history and culture.



Tuesday, May 20: We'll do some more exploring of N. Uist and then head for Berneray to catch a 1:30pm ferry to Leverburgh on the Island of Harris. We arrive at 2:30 and will have time to explore southern Harris including St. Clements Church in Rodel, a 16th-century church build for the chiefs of the MacLeods of Harris. We'll head to Amhuinnsuidhe Castle, our base for the next four nights. (www.amhuinnsuidhe.com).



May 21-23: We'll explore the islands of Lewis and Harris over these three days. Highlights will include visits to the Callanish Standing Stones (older than Stonehenge), Garrannan and Arnol Blackhouses, Stornoway (where Iain was born), the Iron-age broch at Doune Carloway and spectacular mountain scenery with some of the greatest densities of breeding Golden Eagles in Europe. We'll take a hike out to the North Harris Eagle Observatory and visit Loch na Muilne RSPB Reserve and Loch Stiapabhat Nature Reserve. Beaches, rocky headlands and photo-ops and wildlife abound around every corner.



Saturday May 24: We'll have some time in the morning to explore more of Harris and then head to Tarbert to catch the 11:50 am ferry to Uig on Skye. We arrive in Uig at 1:30pm. We'll have time to explore northern Skye and then head to the Sconser Lodge (www.sconserlodge.co.uk) which will be our base for the next three nights.

Sunday, May 25: Today we'll visit Dunvegan Castle and Gardens. Dunvegan is the ancestral home of the Clan MacLeod. On our loop back we'll visit the Talisker Distillery and sample some of Scotland's finest whisky.

Monday, May 26: We'll take a spectacular boat trip on the "Brigadoon" out of Portree Harbor out to Strait of Raasay. This 2-hour trip will include sightings of White-tailed Eagle (enticed to the boat by a fish or two). After or before the trip we'll explore the town of Portree and view the beautiful natural harbor and surrounding headlands. If time allows, we'll visit Clan Donald Skye Visitor Center



which includes Armadale Castle and the Museum of the Isles. Woodland walks will add to our songbird list.

Tuesday, May 27: Today, we'll leave Skye and head south towards Glasgow. We'll take our time and enjoy the spectacular west Highland scenery. Our last night will be at the Holiday Inn at Glasgow Airport.

Wednesday, May 28: After breakfast, we'll walk over to the airport for our flight back to Boston.

All-inclusive cost includes hotel accommodations and all meals, round-trip airfare from Boston to Glasgow, van transportation in Scotland, ferry and boat trips and admission fees to nature reserves and other destinations listed on the itinerary.

Cost per person: \$5,950 (assumes double or twin occupancy room. There is an additional \$500 single room supplement).

For details or to book a space, call Iain at 603-968-7194 or iain.macleod@nhnature.org.

