

Scotland Expedition

Outer Hebrides

Suitable for Competent Intermediate to Advanced Sea Kayakers

20th of April - 28th of April 2024

(Meet & Greet 20 April - Start paddling 21- finish paddling 27- Depart 28 April)

7 Paddling Days

"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 20th of April and take the ferry to Castlebay, which is situated on Barra Island. The plan is to travel from Oban to Castlebay at around 13.30pm. The ferry arrives at 6pm and we will spend the night in Dunard Hostel & Lodge.

Please book your ferry and first/last nights accommodation personally, these are not included in the expedition price.

<https://www.dunardhostel.co.uk>

Please check the ferry company CALMAC for sailing times :

<https://www.calmac.co.uk/article/8101/Barra-Oban---Castlebay>

We will meet for a briefing on the 21st 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 7 days and 6 nights of wild camping.

Please be aware that if conditions are not suitable or safe for wild camping we may utilise the Dunard Hostel & Lodge as a base camp and find safe venues in a variety of locations for appropriate and suitable day paddles (personal expense).

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 27th of April we will stay at the Dunard Hostel & Lodge again, where we will have opportunity to freshen up, enjoy a meal and a few beverages together, before we depart on the ferry for Oban on the 28th of April.

Experience Needed

To get the most out of the expedition you should be a competent Intermediate /Advanced paddler and be comfortable in conditions associated with force 4/5 winds. If you have any questions regarding the required ability please feel free to contact us.

info@seakayakingcornwall.com

What is Included

*Kayak. We can supply a limited number of suitable expedition kayaks.

*Buoyancy aids /PFD.

*Spray decks.

*Paddles.

**We suggest using your own kayak and kit on this expedition so that you are comfortable and have practiced, prepared and packed your kayak before arrival. This is to ensure that all your kit fits and you are familiar with all aspects of your expedition kit and kayak.*

Please confirm you have your own kayak and kit, we do not plan to take a trailer, and we are aware that most people booking on this type of trip, own their own kayaks.

Please inform us if this is a problem for you, we have limited availability to transport boats on roof racks.

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

2 Nights accommodation in Castlebay at the Dunard Hostel & Lodge.

<https://www.dunardhostel.co.uk>

Not Included

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

To book ferry:

<https://www.calmac.co.uk/article/2985/Barra-Oban---Castlebay>

2 Nights accommodation in Castlebay at Dunard Hostel & Lodge.

<https://www.dunardhostel.co.uk>

Food and beverages during the trip.

Camping equipment.

Cost

£935 from the 1st of January 2024 .

Location and Times

We meet in Oban on Saturday the 20th 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 on the 28th of April, on arrival in Oban we bid each other farewell.

What to Bring - Recommended

- Travel insurance.
- Food. Prepare for 7 breakfasts - 7 lunches – 6 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/wet 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