

# ROYAL SCOTSMAN AND EXPEDITION VOYAGE OF SCOTLAND & NORWAY

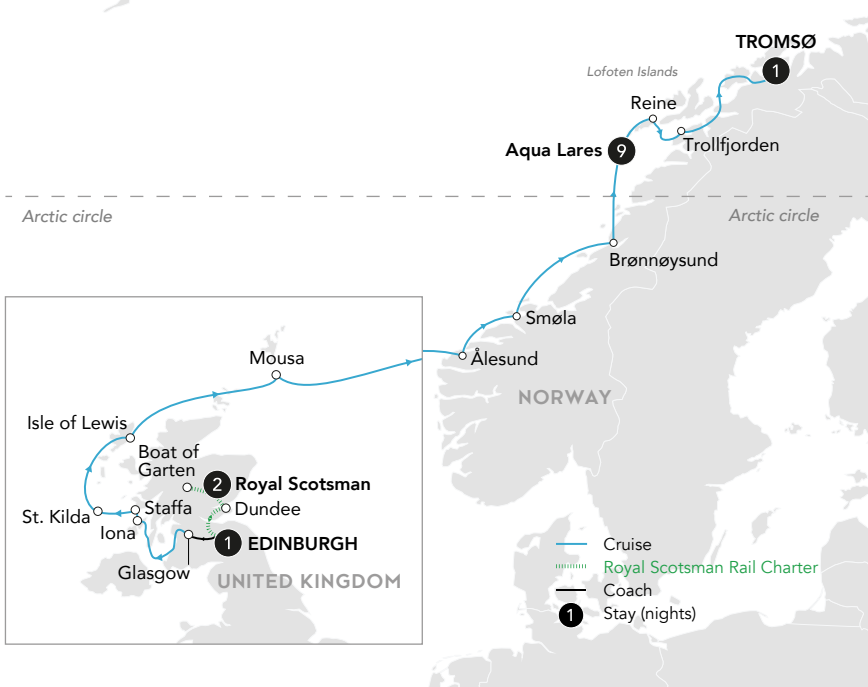
Explore the remote corners of Scotland and Norway during our private charters of the Royal Scotsman and Aqua Lares. Discover Highland culture, ancient ruins, and coastal communities as we explore the Scottish mainland and sail north, across the Hebrides, to the Norwegian coast and the Arctic Circle. Just 26 guests will traverse timeless terrain and enjoy the flexibility and intimacy of our own transport across both land and sea.

## A JOURNEY OVERVIEW

Edinburgh - Boat of Garten -  
 Dundee - Glasgow - Iona - Staffa  
 - St Kilda - Ålesund - Lofoten Islands  
 - Tromsø

14 Days Rail Journey &  
 Expedition Voyage

Departing 19 May 2027



Please note, our cruise itinerary is included merely as a guide. Our voyage will be of an expeditionary nature, where each day's activities will be determined not only by our Captain and Expedition Team, but on occasion, the vagaries of the weather and sea conditions. Should we chance upon any unexpected encounters with majestic marine life or other natural marvels, we also have the flexibility to drop anchor and linger a while.

#### **Day 1 Edinburgh (United Kingdom)**

Check into our luxurious hotel, The Caledonian, located within Scotland's historic capital, Edinburgh. Our afternoon is at leisure, so we can enjoy the hotel's facilities or choose to explore the charms of Edinburgh's Old Town. This evening, our Welcome Dinner takes place within the palatial Queen Anne Room at Edinburgh Castle.

#### **Day 2 Edinburgh, Embark Belmond Royal Scotsman, Boat of Garten**

After breakfast at our hotel, we take a walking tour of the Old Town. Following lunch at a local restaurant, we then adjourn to Waverley Station, where we join our home for the next two nights, the fabled Belmond Royal Scotsman, chartered exclusively for us. The Edwardian elegance of the train's historic carriages provides the atmosphere of a grand country house. We depart Waverley Station and cross the iconic Forth Bridge. Regarded as one of the great engineering achievements of the Victorian age, the railway bridge was one of the first cantilever bridges ever built. We are treated to afternoon tea as we roll through the former Kingdom of Fife, and onward into the Scottish Highlands. Relax over an informal dinner, then retire to the Observation Car for a nightcap and some local entertainment. Our train stops in the village of Boat of Garten overnight.

#### **Day 3 Dundee**

Breakfast is served as we leave Boat of Garten and make our way to Rothiemurchus Estate, within Cairngorms National Park. It's here that we learn about Highland wildlife and survival skills, courtesy of our host, broadcaster and food anthropologist, Ghillie Basan, and her son Zeki. Enjoy a barbecue of seasonal Highland produce while hearing about Ghillie's journey to become Scotland's Food Ambassador. We board the train again in the village of Carrbridge and continue through Inverness and Keith, where we have the option of alighting for a visit to Strathisla Distillery, producers of Chivas Regal. The Royal Scotsman then continues along the North Sea coast through Aberdeenshire and Angus. During our final night on board, we enjoy a celebratory feast and some live jazz music. Our train stops tonight in the city of Dundee.

#### **Day 4 Edinburgh, Disembark Belmond Royal Scotsman, Embark Aqua Lares**

Our final leg sees us making the short journey from Dundee to Edinburgh. We farewell the Royal Scotsman and take a walking tour of Edinburgh, before being transferred to the port of Glasgow. Here we embark our expedition vessel, Aqua Lares. Over the next nine nights, our remote voyage will deliver us to Scotland's islands, the Norwegian coast, and into the Arctic Circle. Settle into your stylish suite, embellished with dark wooden surfaces and sumptuous Italian fabrics. Then take in the views from your position along the Sun Deck, before enjoying the offerings of the onboard restaurant.

### **Day 5 Iona, Staffa**

Our vessel anchors off the coast of the island of Iona. It was here that Christianity was first brought to Scotland, from Ireland, in the sixth century. Established in 563 AD, Iona Abbey and its attendant museum features a fine collection of carved medieval stones and crosses. Following lunch, we continue to Staffa, a tiny island famous for its hexagonal basalt columns. We gain further appreciation for its otherworldly appearance as we approach the entrance to the extraordinary Fingal's Cave. With our Expedition Team on hand, we may also enjoy the rare chance to witness the local puffin colonies.

### **Day 6 St Kilda**

Wake to the spectacular sight of the St Kilda archipelago. While endemic animal species are plentiful here, St Kilda has not been peopled since 1930, when the last residents departed. Some of the dwellings here have been restored, however, with St Kilda being the holder of the UK's only dual World Heritage status, in recognition of its Natural Heritage and Cultural Significance – one of only 39 such sites in the world.

### **Day 7 Isle of Lewis**

On the Isle of Lewis stand the Callanish Stones. These ancient monoliths evoke a great sense of mystery; cruciform in design and featuring a circular arrangement at the intersection of the cross, they are said to have been moved here more than 4,000 years ago. And while their exact purpose remains unknown, their position along a windswept moor, overlooking the sea, adds to the distinct sense of the uncanny imbuing the site.

### **Day 8 Mousa**

Aqua Lares continues its gradual northerly sailing, arriving today on the shores of Mousa, one of the Shetland Islands. One of the most striking sights on the island is the Mousa Broch, a 2,000-year-old circular stone tower. Different theories have been proposed as to its primary function – including as a means of defence and a status symbol – while several sagas of shipwrecks and refuge seekers have been chronicled about the fascinating structure. Comparatively recent ruins also remain across the island, including a settlement of croft houses.

### **Day 9 Ålesund (Norway)**

Having crossed the North Sea, we arrive in Norway, and the city of Ålesund. With its pastel facades beautifying a seaside setting, the city makes for a captivating introduction to the Norwegian leg of our journey. In 1904, the area was devastated by a great fire, with the majority of its houses being lost. Within three years, Ålesund was almost entirely rebuilt in the Art Nouveau style, which so distinguishes it today.

### **Day 10 Smøla**

Further north, we reach the Smøla archipelago, whose sparsely populated islands play host to various fishing hamlets. A diversity of bird species can be seen here, notably white-tailed eagles, grey herons and guillemots. Otters and seals are also known to frequent the archipelago's waters.

### **Day 11 Brønnøysund**

The town of Brønnøysund sits along a narrow peninsula, nestled between several small islands and framed by rocky mountains. It's here that we spy the uncommon form of Torghatten, a colossal granite dome famous for the large hole occupying its centre. Dominating the small island upon which it sits, Torghatten appears to survey the surrounding seascape and its neighbouring islets. Across a short stretch of the Norwegian Sea lies the Vega archipelago, whose small population subsists mainly on fishing.

### **Day 12 Lofoten Islands, Trollfjorden**

Cue the fanfare, as we officially cross the Arctic Circle today. Our vessel docks in Reine, a small fishing village in the Lofoten Islands. Homes painted red and white dot the shores here, before the idyllic surrounds of jagged mountains and deep-blue fjords. Enjoy lunch within this serene setting before returning to the ship. Navigating remote waters brings us to the awe-inspiring Trollfjorden. Sheer cliffs rise either side of us as we marvel at the ethereal environment of this comparatively narrow fjord. Aboard Zodiacs, we then get closer to the action, admiring the fishing techniques of soaring sea eagles, curious seals, and wondrous geology.

### **Day 13 Tromsø, Disembark Aqua Lares**

Our arrival in Tromsø signals the end of a remarkable voyage. We farewell our crew and disembark Aqua Lares. Joining our local guide, we then set off for a drive across the Sandnessund Bridge to reach the island of Kvaløya. Soon we arrive at the Arctic wilderness camp, Villmarksenter, where we meet some of the resident Alaskan huskies. Continuing our drive across the icy landscapes of Kvaløya, we cross the Sommarøy Bridge to explore the island which shares its name. A vision of paradise unfolds before us, as laid-back locals live in harmony with nature, enjoying white sandy beaches and crystal-clear turquoise waters. Enjoy lunch here while contemplating majestic waterfront views.

Back in Tromsø, we gaze upon the triangular roof and glass facade of the Arctic Cathedral. Inside this distinctive architectural landmark, a private organ concert welcomes our return.

This evening, a Farewell Dinner sees us celebrating our shared adventure.

### **Day 14 Tromsø**

Farewell your Tour Host Team and fellow guests this morning as we transfer to the airport, our extraordinary journey at an end.